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A NAVAL HISTORY OF THE WAR  
1914-1918

*WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR*

THE YEAR OF TRAFALGAR.

TALES OF THE GREAT WAR.

THE STORY OF THE OXFORDSHIRE AND  
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LIGHT INFANTRY.

SUBMARINE AND ANTI-SUBMARINE.

THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA.

THE BOOK OF THE THIN RED LINE.

THE BOOK OF THE HAPPY WARRIOR.

DRAKE'S DRUM, AND OTHER POEMS.



# A NAVAL HISTORY OF THE WAR

1914-1918

BY

HENRY NEWBOLT

*SECOND EDITION*

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HODDER AND STOUGHTON  
LIMITED LONDON



TO  
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH FISHER  
R.N., C.B., M.V.O.  
CAPTAIN OF H.M.S. *ST. VINCENT* AT THE BATTLE OF JUTLAND  
AND IN THE CRISIS OF OUR FATE  
FROM JUNE 1917 TO DECEMBER 1918  
DIRECTOR OF THE ANTI-SUBMARINE DIVISION  
AT THE ADMIRALTY





## PREFACE

THE present volume was planned and laid upon the stocks at an early stage of the war—some years before there could be any certainty that the Official History of the Naval Operations would ever be launched, or at any rate allowed to ply on open water. It was completed, and is now offered to the public, in the hope that it may be found to have a use of its own.

Sir Julian Corbett's book is, by common consent, an admirable piece of work—probably the best account of military operations ever published by a department recently engaged in a great war. The task was committed to a writer who seems to have been born and trained for it: it is not likely that even in this country a second could be found to compete with him. But his object and his method are not the only possible object and method. A well-known critic has gone so far as to declare that even when it is as admirably done as Sir Julian Corbett's book, an Official History cannot be history, because it is official. It is at any rate true that an official account, even though it be an excellent scientific study, cannot be in the fullest sense a personal expression, because it expresses the author only in so far as his outlook coincides with that of the office which commands his services, and is therefore not certain to give us all that we could desire.

It is here that an opportunity seems open to the historian with an interest of his own—especially if that interest leads him to take account of the changed nature of war and of our ideas concerning it. When we pass from limited to unlimited war, from a contest upon a limited scale and between picked representatives, to a struggle between nations, in which is

involved the effort and danger of the whole population on each side, we shall find that all our ideas of war must be re-examined, the professional view will tend to become less absorbing, and the question of origins, aims, and methods—even the question of the legitimacy of war itself—will be continually floating across the foreground.

Our late enemies were always determined to keep war wholly upon the professional plane, to emphasise the scientific and exclude the moral view. Among us, too, there have been militarists to whom the same doctrine has approved itself. But this war should have opened their eyes, for the struggle, though it seemed to have its origin in smaller causes, was quickly seen, even by Germans, to be “a conflict between two conceptions of world-politics”: that is to say, between two conceptions of human life. After seeing the two conceptions illustrated upon a gigantic scale, the judgement of mankind appears to have reaffirmed the old code of humanity and chivalry, and condemned the new philosophy of Might and the new method of Frightfulness. But whether this mood lasts or not, whether the issue is already decided or must still be fought out in some more terrible war of liberation, there can be no doubt of the nature of the fight, or of the opportunity presented to the historian.

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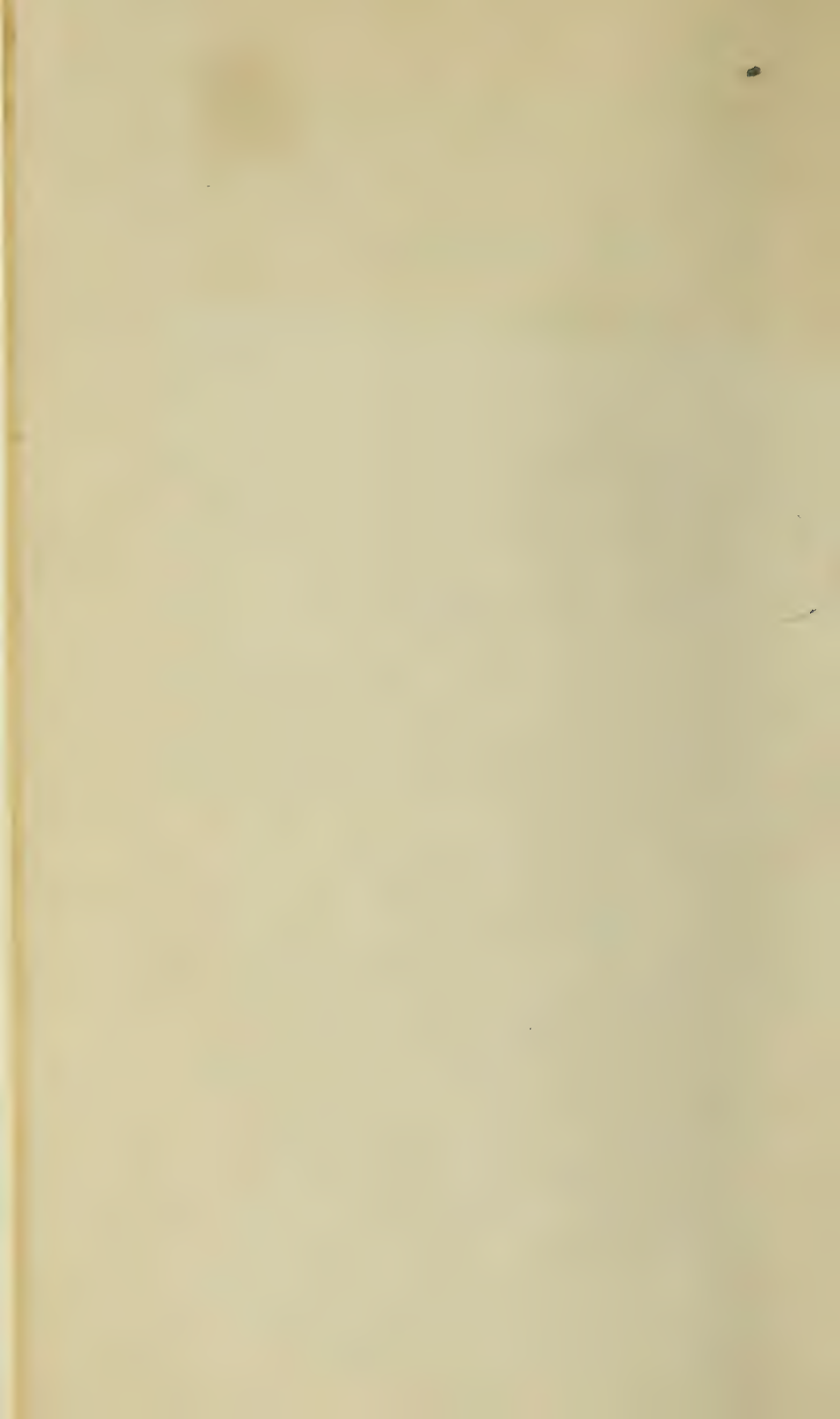
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## CHAPTER I

### MODERN WAR AND PSYCHOLOGY

A SAYING has come down to us from the time of our great-grandfathers which well marks the character of war as it was known to them and to all generations of men down to the year 1914: "In war every commander makes mistakes, and he wins who makes the fewest." The implications of this are so clear as hardly to need stating. The contest is conceived as one between individual chiefs and as depending ultimately upon their relative skill. It is played out upon a chess-board, a tract of land or sea, known as the Seat of War, or the Sphere of Operations, and it is watched from a distance (both of time and space) by communities with no control over the conduct of the struggle and with very little general understanding of its origin or object. They may take a pride in the success of their own people or suffer from the economic consequences: but nine-tenths of the population on either side have no real grasp of the questions involved. The actual combatants are ignorant too: the officers are professionals, following the old tradition of a feudal nobility. They save their country, or follow their fortune: but with all their fine qualities they are only pawns and pieces "to deck the board of smiling Kings," to carry out the moves of their commander and pay the price of his victories or

defeats. The more fortunate and skilful of them will learn the game and become the famous players of the next generation. The men have not even this before them as a possibility: they are professionals too, but only subordinate professionals, and their experiences, when told on their return home, will not contribute to the political intelligence of their friends. Old Kaspar could not tell "what they fought each other for," and he represented beyond doubt the majority of his class. Even in 1914 there were trained Britons of the Old Army who left for Flanders in the belief that they were going to fight the Belgians.

This professionalism, this separation of war from the common life of the people, has its natural reflection in our histories. A military history is a technical study: even if it is more popular in style, even if, like Napier's famous book, it claims a place among national epics, it is still professional in scope, and takes everything for granted but the acts of war. The general historian, on the other hand, is apt to fall into one of two extremes: either he gives out much sound of drum and trumpet—and is justified by the fact that the domestic life of nations has been more obscure than the military acts of their rulers—or he makes a courageous effort to set things in a true proportion and passes over the epic parts of the story too slightly. In Green's *History of the English People*, a book of some two thousand pages, the whole chase of the French fleet to the West Indies and the battle of Trafalgar are dismissed in a single passage of twenty lines.

The development of war has made changes here. If it is certain that for the future no historian will represent campaigns and battles as the only note-



worthy events in the record of a people, it is equally certain that none will deal slightly with such matters, for war has become in the full sense national—the effort and the endurance are the effort and endurance of the whole body of citizens, called forth by a spirit practically unanimous, which proceeds in its turn from a general understanding and approval of the national case. The historian, then, in treating of wars, will be compelled to study them, not as manifestations of the will and character of a king, a commander, a political group, a military class, or a limited number of picked combatants, but as the conflicts of whole communities, each with its own organic life and, in a sense, its own personality. This means the disappearance of the chess-board view of war, except for purely technical purposes. “It was a great game for which the pieces were set when the sun rose upon January 1, 1805”—for a hundred years after Trafalgar that was no inaccurate way of writing of a great campaign, but it would be an impossible beginning for any history of the late war, except a definitely professional one. “Great Britain,” says the Official History, “was as ready as ever to play the old game, and had set the board with all the old skill.” By the choice of this very metaphor the historian effectively draws attention to the lines on which he is to work. “Great Britain” is to mean as of old the First Lord and the Board of Admiralty, and “the game” to consist as of old in the solution of tactical and strategical problems. It will always, as long as wars continue to occur, be of great interest and of great use to have competent studies of this kind—scientific studies in which a portion of the subject is separated for the purpose of

special investigation—but they will inevitably become more difficult to write and less likely to satisfy the average reader. Where there were formerly two views of war, the military and the civilian, there is now only one, for in modern war there are practically no non-combatants. Even to the inhabitants of an island, secured against actual invasion, war is no longer a distant spectacle, a game played by professionals; by air-raids, mines, coastal bombardments, or factory explosions the citizen dies the soldier's death or suffers the soldier's wounds: the munitions which our armies use in the field must be made by another army of the workshops not less large or less highly trained: the spirit by which the front line holds is reinforced by a ceaseless current from home: the Navy is multiplied by the addition of whole fleets of tramps and trawlers. These facts cannot be ignored, they can hardly be even set aside for separate treatment, for they are real elements in the combination. If the whole mass of the spectators on each side are to join in the game, a new set of considerations will be introduced, old rules will possibly be violated or changed, and methods will be adopted which in former wars would have been impracticable or ineffective.

Psychology will therefore now become of the first importance to the historian. The common belief runs counter to this, but the common belief is wrong. It is quite true that in naval actions, as on land, no tactical skill can avoid "the brutal precision of mechanical and material superiority," and that on a given occasion success will generally go "not so much to the brave as to those who think ahead in terms of mechanical force," but this is no new doctrine.

Nelson summed up the experience of centuries when he insisted that "only numbers can annihilate." But no war between great nations has ever yet been won by material and mechanical superiority, whether carefully prepared beforehand or improvised at need, unless there has also been present a moral or psychological superiority due either to individual genius, to exceptional courage and endurance, to special insight or experience in framing policy, or to gifts of national character which include, besides all these, an aptitude for bearing the blows and the strain of a conflict and an adaptability equal to its problems. The course of the late war not only proves this, but proves it on a great scale and in every detail, especially in the one last mentioned. In material the Germans were at first far more carefully equipped than any of their opponents; in the latter part of the war the position was reversed. But it is impossible to contend that material superiority was ever the most powerful or the decisive cause of success. If it had been so, it would have been a disaster for humanity. A struggle whose issues were so vital and its scale so vast could only, unless life is a mockery, be decided by the greatest of all forces, and those forces are not material or mechanical. The contest was not one between armies or navies but between whole nations, and more than that, between their most fundamental ideas. The chief source of power on either side was not the relative size of guns or armies or the relative militarism of their leaders, but the capacity of the several nations for war. Grand Admiral von Tirpitz had an uneasy perception of the truth at the very beginning. "When one sees," he wrote in 1914 of the German munition-makers, "this colossal



industry on the part of our people, the belief is forced on one that they can never be beaten." But against this he has two other and more profound reflections. The first is a recollection from history—"Only, the silent pressure of sea-power gives one to think." The second goes deeper still because it touches national character and life—"Nobody seems to understand that our greatest danger is still the polo-playing Englishman." That was written in August 1914, when this country had neither great armies nor great guns—had not even rifles or ammunition.

The psychological element in modern war was handled differently on the German and British sides ; and the difference was characteristic of the two peoples. In theory the Germans were far ahead of us, in practice they were comparatively unsuccessful. They found the secret, but proved themselves unable to use it. We found the necessity and met it almost without realising our discovery. The German method is here the less scientific of the two. It attempts to deal with human affairs as if they were not human, it substitutes mechanism for sincerity and calculation for tact. To some who knew the German leaders well, there was nothing surprising in their misconduct of the war. M. Take Jonescu praises one German statesman as an exception to the general rule : "Not a great but a strong man, thoroughly able to understand things, and to find the best solution of a given problem. In the intellectual desert of German public life that alone is a great quality." And again he writes : "Like nearly all Germans, King Charles was not merely ignorant of England, but totally incapable of understanding her. The Anglo-Saxon world is always surprised that Germans are as blind as they

are where England is concerned : the truth is that, apart from very rare and partial exceptions, the German is organically unable to appreciate the English spirit." It is equally true that the German intelligence, however efficient on its own lines, consistently failed to understand even the intellectual arguments of other nations, our own included. In the years before the war, through the long series of speeches and negotiations on the Kaiser's Navy Law, we came gradually to recognise the impossibility of bringing the Germans to see the fundamental difference between their view and ours of the national position of our respective Navies. To both, a great fleet was an Insurance, but while to us insurance meant security for our trade and the communications of our world-wide commonwealth, to them it meant a security against our interference in the war or series of wars to which they were looking forward. They could not understand that for us this was the meaning, and the whole meaning, of our great naval strength : its greatness was merely proportioned to the interests which it had to secure. It was never with us, as with them, a political instrument—a sword to throw into the scale. We did not hold the German view of international relations as expressed by Treitschke, "War is politics *par excellence*." Our political doctrine is the antithesis of this : it has been equally well stated for us by Sir Walter Raleigh, "War is the failure of politics." In short, our insurance was a true insurance, strictly defensive : theirs was part of an aggressive policy and was based on a view of human relations which we regard as profoundly immoral.

This inability to understand the psychology of



other nations is no doubt due partly to a difference of nature and partly to a difference of experience. In their dealings with their own people the German leaders have found their method sufficiently successful. A population whose character is at the same time highly emotional and extremely servile has readily accepted an artificial morality imposed on them by artificial means. The intelligent were worked on by a doctrinaire logic, the moral by a doctrinaire Machiavellianism, the religious by a doctrinaire tribal personification, the violent by a doctrinaire militarism, the gentle by a doctrinaire sentimentality, and all by a doctrinaire national pride. That any of these mechanical levers deliberately applied should have moved human beings to strong feeling is an astonishing fact which must be noted by scientific psychologists. It will probably appear, as the result of a comparative study, that the Germans are not the only civilised people susceptible to the influences now described as "propaganda," but that they are far more deficient than others in the power of resistance or criticism, and in the instinctive perception of what is sincerely said and what is deliberate and artificial. After what we have heard and seen since 1914, we cannot be mistaken in judging that both bombast and falsehood may succeed in imposing a point of view or an emotional condition upon Germans, where they would achieve complete failure with any other nation. The Kaiser's repeated proclamations, promises, protestations, and self-deificatory profanities, the repeatedly exposed falsifications and suppressions of the German wireless news department, the anticipatory charges against us of mine-laying in open waters, of employing poison

gas, of misusing hospital ships, the professional brag of the Tirpitzes and Scheers about their naval achievements—these were all apparently considered as manœuvres no less useful because they were doomed to speedy and conclusive refutation. They were intended no doubt for immediate and not for lasting effect. They were timed, like the rush on Paris, to accomplish their object before the leaves had fallen. But the method was used again and again to the end, and its repeated failure seems never to have discouraged those who practised it. Their confidence may have been justified so far as their own countrymen were concerned, for the German, as the Grand Admiral himself has told us, is “an incorrigible political illusionist.” How incorrigible we may judge from Admiral von Holtzendorff’s remarkable letter to Hindenburg in December 1916. He argues that Great Britain’s success in this war is due to the fact that she has been able to preserve, not her naval predominance, but the belief in it throughout the world. “In life,” he continues, “it is not things as they are which decide, but the images people make of them. Whether Great Britain’s naval predominance remains or not depends on what the rest of the world outside of Germany thinks on the matter on the last day of the world war.”

On our side we, too, may be insufficiently observant in these matters, but about our own psychology we can hardly be so completely ignorant as were our enemies. We know that we are instinctive where they are logical, and that where they make elaborate preparations we are contented to run risks and improvise in the moment of emergency. By rule this should often have brought us to disaster, and it

has, in fact, given us many a bad month in many a war. But the end has always been world-power and not downfall: and this has happened so often that it has seemed to us to call for a general phrase to describe the process. We have the habit, it appears, of "muddling through," and though this is in itself no explanation it does point to some underlying cause. When an old and great nation has the habit of believing in its own powers to meet an emergency however dangerous, when that faith is unfailing even in the darkest hour, we cannot be wrong in estimating these powers as among the strongest of its resources and a great proof of its natural capacity for war. Other things being equal, it would be natural to expect that the strong vitality and unshakable nerve of such a people as this, backed by a national experience of 600 years, would give them an immense advantage over an Empire recently conglomerated from peoples of emotional instability and excited by the deliberate artifice of their rulers. Other things in this war were, of course, not equal, but the inequality, though great, could only stave off and not prevent the inevitable result. On the other side it may be said that the British instinct is essentially defensive and conservative. This is held to be weakness, since we must always wait for the attack to stimulate our defensive imagination. That is true, and the weakness is one which we may do well to guard against, but our real strength will still lie in the spirit and force of our counter-attack and in the certainty that we shall never fight at all unless in a cause which is more to us than life.

Upon this follows a reflection which may be speculative, but which is supported in a singularly



convincing fashion by the events that followed our overwhelming victory. One of the most far-sighted prophecies concerning the war was made by M. Take Jonescu at Sinaia on August 2, 1914, when he foretold the end for the defeated nations as the sudden veering of opinion towards the extreme left and the fall of crowns in a cataract, due to the flood which must inevitably rise out of a war engineered by absolute monarchs. It will be observed that he did not even think it worth while to state which would be the defeated nations. He assumed that they would be the autocracies. We do not know all that was in his mind, but what he said accords entirely with our own conclusion. If war is to involve whole nations instead of professional armies, the great sources of strength will be the instinctive and sincere belief in a right cause and the undivided will which accompanies it. These advantages cannot be looked for in a country where the cause is a political one, demonstrated, if not created, by the logical intellect, and where the will is the will, not of the whole people, but of those who can be driven or cajoled by an autocrat or a militarist oligarchy for their own purposes.

Here, again, we have come to a conclusion which runs counter to the common belief. From a series of examples both classical and modern an induction has been made to the effect that an autocratic form of government is better suited than a democratic one to wage war efficiently. Neither the part played by the Kaiser in the late war nor the conduct of it by his Military and Naval Staff afford any support to this belief: they form a contrary instance of irresistible force. The true dividing line between

wars ancient and modern must be drawn at the beginning of August 1914. Wars before that date were none of them modern in the true sense, and inductions founded on them cannot be trusted for the future. An autocracy or a general staff can conduct a limited and professional war, but modern war, being unlimited and largely unprofessional, can only be waged by the whole force of a nation spontaneously applied. The Germans, or some of them, have discovered this for themselves. Grand Admiral von Tirpitz has recorded in two significant sentences the collapse of the German war administration and the cause of the inevitable chaos. "One of the reasons," he says, "with which it has been attempted to justify the breaking up of the homogeneous—so to speak, sovereign—Admiralty, and its partition into different departments, was the assertion that the whole management of the Navy was too much for one man. This theory, which was at the back of the mistaken Imperial Command, thus put the reins into the hand of a monarch who had to govern much more than the Navy!" The autocrat of to-day, if he goes to war, must not only direct army, navy, and air force, he must be prepared to wield the unprofessional as well as the professional forces of a whole nation. It goes without saying that no single man could be equal to such a task, and the German militarists never intended that the Kaiser should seriously attempt it. Their hope was that he might be useful as a bond of union and a national mouthpiece or figurehead. From the first he was a failure as a figurehead and a disaster as a mouthpiece; in the end he became a cause, not of union, but of disruption. This was due, as M. Take Jonescu foresaw it would



be due, to the discovery by the mass of the people of the incapacity for war of their rulers. The Government of a democratic State may be slower in taking decisions, and will certainly be less vivacious in the conduct of its correspondence, but it will either have the incomparable advantage of being an integral and representative part of the nation at war, or it will disappear in favour of others more competent and more representative, and its disappearance will not involve disruption or a cataract of crowns.

This conclusion, then, of the superiority of popular government to autocracy in the conduct of modern war is not only a probable one, but it is warranted by the facts of our late experience. We may take from it a much needed comfort, for we have at present no certainty that we have seen the last of militarism. The plain course of human evolution is in the direction of freedom, and wars on a great scale must always recur if, while some parts of the Western world are comparatively free and devoted to liberal ideas, others come again under the domination of irresponsible despots, whether royal or military. A civilisation divided against itself cannot rest or work until the conflict of ideals is decided. The most encouraging inference, then, to be drawn from the late war is that in such gigantic struggles the autocratic power, whose existence makes them inevitable, is itself less capable for war than the genius of the free nations, and as in the past, so in the future must at every crisis work out its own disgrace and failure.

## CHAPTER II

### BRITISH AND GERMAN POLICY

POLICY, preparation, execution—these are the three elements of success or failure in war. In the limited wars of the past the third may appear to have been the most important of the three: but the greater the scale of the contest, the more will depend on the preparation made for it, and when we come to a struggle where both the body and the soul of whole peoples are engaged, we can see that the result must be greatly affected, if not completely determined, by the lines of policy on each side. In a war of such duration as that which we have lately fought, carried on by such immense armies, and maintained by such intense national industry, a sudden success, as we can now see, is impossible to either side. The aggressor may have accumulated a great preponderance of armaments and chosen the most favourable moment for his blow, but by a surprise he can only wound. Great nations cannot be assassinated, they cannot even be disabled, by one thrust, however sudden. In the long strain which follows natural causes will re-establish themselves with their natural effects, and it is here that the importance of policy will be visible. In the belief of many that policy will in the end succeed which is most in accordance with the will of the divine ruler of the world. As

many others, perhaps, would reject the assumption upon which this statement is framed, but its essential truth is a scientific one and depends upon no creed. A policy may be a general or a special one; far-sighted or limited in vision, legitimate or unscrupulous, defensive or predatory, above all it may rest upon permanent needs and long experience, or be a theoretical design to upset the course of nature by cunning and brute force. By comparing throughout these pairs of alternatives a purely scientific mind might well arrive at the conclusion that in a world-wide conflict between the nations, victory is far more likely to incline to the side whose policy works on old-established lines and accords rather than conflicts with the nature and the motives of mankind. It was the difference between the general naval policy of England and of Germany which, more than any other cause, determined the result of this war, and unless our present view is entirely mistaken the result might have been foreseen from the beginning. The policy which has, through centuries, built and maintained the British Navy is not a highly theoretical one. It is based upon mere necessity, perceived by mere instinct, handed on by mere tradition, and carried out by mere self-reliance. It does not preclude mistakes, but the mistakes will hardly be fatal ones, for they will generally be errors in adaptation, and therefore remediable. The defensive position is thought by some masters of war to be the weaker one, but it is not difficult to see that action which is in accordance with necessity, instinct, tradition, and self-reliance will at any rate not be subject to the same friction, disillusion, and rebuffs which are inevitable when an attempt is made to overrule those forces

commonly summed up in the phrase, "the nature of things."

The Germans endeavoured to turn this line of thought to their own advantage by a perversion of Darwin's phrase. They maintained that "the nature of things" should ensure the survival of the strongest and most aggressive. It was their belief, and the belief, it may be added, of a few cynics among ourselves, that every nation when it reaches its maximum of strength will, if it deserves to live at all, attempt the domination of the world. Germany had certainly reached, in the early years of the present century, her period of greatest brute force. Her object was plain, and, except in England, there was a widely spread belief that she would succeed. It obtained even among those of her own people who followed the Prussian lead unwillingly. M. Take Jonescu relates that in the spring of 1915 a Saxon diplomatist said to him in conversation: "All that you say is perfectly true: the militarism of Prussia, the martinet spirit of Prussia, is the most abominable thing on the face of the earth, but it happens to be invincible. And there is nothing for us—for any of us—to do but to bow before it as before fate." To this M. Jonescu replied: "I will see you again at the end of the war." The Roumanian statesman had the historical knowledge, and the faith, which was lacking to the German. He knew that the invincibility of the most evil power in the world is neither a matter of historical experience nor of probable expectation. The successes, such as they were, of Philip of Spain, of Louis XIV., and of Napoleon, only lasted long enough to arouse a power capable of inflicting upon each of them a final defeat, and the Prussian attempt, being a far



more dangerous and evil one, was only the more certain to draw upon itself a greater downfall.

The English people realised the danger, as we have said, in the old way, by instinct and by the recollection of experience. The national policy was a practical one and needed no theory ; it was not until the end of the first year of the war that it occurred to any Englishman to analyse it. On July 31, 1915, Mr. Balfour, as First Lord of the Admiralty, thought it worth while to reply, in the *New York World*, to a communication from Count Reventlow entitled "A Year of Naval Warfare," and published in the same paper. Count Reventlow understood neither German nor English naval policy. He declared that England desired to attack Germany, and that, but for the political miscalculations of the German Government, the High Sea Fleet would not have been in 1914 numerically inferior to ours. But his main purpose was to magnify the German and minimise the British achievement at sea during the twelve months. It was in reply to the latter part of this argument that Mr. Balfour proposed to estimate the success of the British Fleet by analysing the nature of the work which it had been set to carry out. There are, he said, seven, and only seven, functions which a fleet can perform in time of war :

It may drive the enemy's commerce off the sea.

It may protect its own commerce.

It may render the enemy's fleet impotent.

It may make the transfer of enemy troops across the sea impossible, whether for attack or defence.

It may transport its own troops where it will.

It may secure their supplies, and (in fitting circumstances)



It may assist their operations.

This abstract scientific statement is the work of a highly philosophical mind, looking back upon the year's events ; it is virtually identical with the one published by Lord Jellicoe in 1919 : but it is quite possible that the naval problem did not present itself in that form to any one at the Admiralty twelve months before. The tasks before the British Navy were practical and particular ones : they fall, it is true, into the seven classes enumerated, but they are not visible in their vital reality or in their full immensity until they are separately stated with the names which belong to them, and the part which they each bear to the general conduct of this war. As concrete problems they may be restated as follows :

First, the destruction of the enemy's commerce includes the stoppage of his sea-borne supplies, both of food and of munitions of war, or the material for them : also the disabling of his credit by the prevention of exports.

Secondly, the protection of our own commerce necessitated the control of all the seas of the world. The Atlantic was our main avenue of supply, but we had also to think of the routes to and from Australia, New Zealand, India, and China, and a Northern Patrol was necessary to ensure the passage from Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and the north of Russia.

Thirdly, the North Sea must be effectively controlled by a Grand Fleet capable of dealing with the German High Sea Fleet.

Fourthly, flotillas must be maintained as a guard against possible invasion.

Fifthly, the transport of troops must be covered from attack, and under this head alone there were

included before the end a number of simultaneous efforts entirely beyond parallel in military history. An army of millions was passed oversea from the British Isles, from India, from Australia, and New Zealand, and at last from America, to France, to India, to Africa (East and West), to Egypt and Palestine, to Gallipoli and to Salonica.

Sixthly, the supplies to all these forces, and to most of them simultaneously, had to be maintained for more than four years ; and

Seventhly, in several cases the Navy had to co-operate in the military operations, notably in Gallipoli and on the Belgian coast.

Finally, when the naval war changed its character and became an unrestricted submarine campaign, under the second and third of our headings, an entirely new fleet of mine-sweepers, trawlers, and anti-submarine patrols had to be provided and equipped, to secure the safety both of our ships-of-war and our mercantile marine.

These tasks, taken altogether, formed a work possible only to the strongest power in the world : but there is nothing about them which could stamp them with that other name, aggressive. The effort demanded had for its aim not conquest but security. The force prepared was prepared in order to meet any case which might arise, and not to achieve domination by a war to be brought about for the purpose.

British policy, then, corresponded in every respect to the first of our two alternative types. It was a legitimate policy because it was general and defensive. It aimed not at attacking a particular enemy but at repelling any aggressor. It must, of necessity, be far-sighted, and to be far-sighted might be thought

an easier matter for the theoretical German than for the less methodical Englishman. The reverse, however, is in fact the truth. No purely theoretical intellect is capable of dealing with the complexities of modern war. The more perfect the plan, the more certain is it to be dislocated by unforeseen accidents. The policy of the British Admiralty was not only a practical one resting upon permanent needs; it was also more likely to have that insight which goes deeper than logical theory. It is possible that at one time too much, at another time too little importance was attached to questions of material: it is nevertheless true that although our preparation for war was far from complete in detail, it was as sufficient in plan as the preparation of an honest and peace-loving State can ever be. The general policy of the Admiralty was not found wanting; it is the only permissible one for this country. But its success will always depend upon the training and imaginative power of the staff which is to carry it into effect.

The German policy offers in every respect a complete contrast. It was narrowed to the achievement of a particular and transitory object, it was aggressive, lawless, and predatory, it was based upon no experience, and relied upon method and material rather than on instinct or practical skill. A policy of this kind makes many assumptions and not all of them can be justifiable. To begin with, since an attack is planned, there must be complete agreement as to the part to be played by the different military services. No such agreement was ever reached in Germany. In the view of the soldiers the German Fleet was a minor force auxiliary to the Army, and must take its general orders from the military chiefs. This theory



was embarrassed by the existence of the War Lord, who was neither military nor naval, but posed, and desired to act, as both. In moments of crisis, as for example at the danger point of the submarine campaign, the decision actually lay with Hindenburg, who overruled the politicians in favour of the Naval Staff, though he knew nothing about the Navy, and was incapable of understanding the political situation. This fatal division of opinion, this general failure to understand the functions and powers of the Navy, was traceable, according to Grand-Admiral von Tirpitz, long before the war. He was himself the designer of the modern German Navy, but he was not its only designer, nor was he allowed to direct its use when completed and put in action. His original plan was to build a fleet which in combination with that of an ally could dominate the British Fleet in the North Sea. He wrote to the Kaiser in 1897 : " As a thorough-going cruiser war and a war on the high seas against England and other great states is altogether excluded by our lack of foreign bases and by Germany's geographical position—the foreign Admiralties know this quite well—what we need is a battle fleet which can be stationed between Heligoland and the Thames"—and not a foreign service fleet. He adds to-day this comment: " One single ally at sea would have sufficed in the Great War to enable us to fight, with the most favourable prospects, for the freedom of the seas. The first thing, therefore, was to create for ourselves a fleet which would give us ' alliance-value,' and the second was a corresponding ' alliance-policy ' and the avoidance of all friction in foreign policy before this end was achieved." It will be noted that whereas he

had first proposed only to overawe England and keep her out of the intended war, he afterwards came to believe in the possibility of actually defeating her Navy. It is probably a hankering rather than a belief, for he shows clearly on later pages of his book that a fight with England was what he wished to avoid. "But there existed a means wherewith to improve our relations considerably—the creation of a German Fleet which would make an attack upon German trade a more risky venture for England than it was at the time of Bismarck's utterance"; and again: "I would have sacrificed the whole Navy Bill for a really solid agreement of neutrality (with England), as I had let the Emperor know beforehand."

Whatever his policy was, he has to complain that it was not pursued as he wished. First, there were financial difficulties; the Bill was modified by the politicians. Bethmann-Hollweg and Kühlmann refused—to the credit of their intelligence—to accept his view of the situation or his method for meeting it. On the other hand, the Kaiser actually outran him. "I could never discover, however, how to ward off the frequent interference of the Emperor, whose imagination, once it had fixed upon ship-building, was fed by all manner of impressions. Suggestions and proposals are cheap in the Navy, and change like a kaleidoscope: if the Emperor had spoken with some Lieutenant-Commander or had seen something abroad, he was full of new demands, constructing, reproaching me with backwardness, and even thinking to rouse me by means of warnings."

Another complaint is that neither Bethmann-Hollweg nor the people understood the new doctrine of power or the cause of their own weakness of char-



acter. "Our lack of dignity in adversity as well as our insufficient restraint in good fortune are due at bottom to the illusion that our encompassed position in the world can be overcome by words and feelings instead of solely by power, rigidly held and skilfully applied." The result was a too constant display of shining armour at Agadir and elsewhere. "It was a common, fundamental failing of our policy to use up piecemeal the great but insufficient reputation of power which Bismarck left us, by means of repeated demonstrations which showed our love of peace, but also our nervousness."

The love of peace, it seemed to us, would have been better proved by some agreement such as that offered by Lord Haldane, for a limitation of armaments; and some of the Grand-Admiral's own countrymen took this view. The *Frankfurter Zeitung*, when it was at last able to speak out (1918, No. 330), wrote as follows: "Bethmann did not accept this proposal (Haldane's proposal for a 2-3 standard) and we know well why. Not because he did not want to do so himself, nor because he had not recognised that this solution was wholly sufficient for Germany's justified interests, but because he was miserably afraid of Tirpitz and his journalistic companions, of the impudent, criminal propaganda which the Admiralty was carrying on at the expense of the German taxpayer." The answer of the Grand-Admiral to this attack is that though he wanted a fleet, he did not want it to fight with. The war was the fault of the politicians, and it ruined his scheme. "In view of England's endeavour to encompass us with a coalition, it was a question of our keeping our nerve, continuing to arm on a grand scale, avoiding

all provocation, and waiting without anxiety until our sea-power was established and forced the English to let us breathe in peace. We have done the opposite to all this, and thus, at the very moment when relief was already in sight, the storm-cloud, which had already begun to move away, burst over us." In 1914, as in 1904, war with England ought to have been avoided, "and it could probably have been avoided too, as the naval gamble had already taken effect, if only our political leaders had clearly perceived the danger of this war at the right moment." Their mistake, he says, was due to the illusion that the Austro-Serbian conflict could be localised. If the politicians had this illusion they certainly shared it with the naval and military chiefs of Germany.

One thing, at least, they realised at once which the militarists only discovered later. England's declaration of war in a just cause involved the immediate bankruptcy of Germany's naval policy and made probable the ultimate ruin of her whole enterprise. Tirpitz declares himself to have been in favour of an early battle. He can only think now "with almost unbearable sorrow" of the difference that might have been produced by a sea-battle fought to a decision in the early months of the war. Jutland, he maintains, was a victorious engagement, but unfortunately failed to change the general position. Earlier in the war even an unfavourable sea-battle, he thinks, would not have materially damaged the German prospects. Admiral Scheer, on the other hand, speaks from the beginning of "the hopeless inferiority of the German Fleet." Both, however, are agreed upon the fatal subordination of the naval command to the generals. "Those in command

of the Fleet," says Scheer, "had no right to exercise a decisive influence on the conduct of the war, but could make representations . . ." "As soon as war had broken out," says Tirpitz, "the Fleet was, as far as possible, thrust into the background, and the impossible task undertaken of defeating England before the walls of Paris. . . . The German Government had never approached the question how one should win a war, simply leaving the matter to the General Staff of the Army, which, in its turn, was not competent to deal with the political, economic, and naval questions raised by a world war." The Grand-Admiral goes down to history as a pathetic figure. He has a house at General Headquarters and may attend conferences. He spends his time pacing his garden instead of his quarter-deck; he is entitled to "make representations," but nobody pays the least attention to them. He resigns his office and his hopes.

In the meantime Admiral von Pohl decided to keep the High Sea Fleet in harbour and use only the submarine weapon. The Grand-Admiral here finds it difficult to distinguish between cause and effect. "From the military point of view, the submarine war on commerce grew in importance as soon as the deciding factor was no longer, and moreover could not be, naval war. For directly the submarine war became the chief weapon, the Fleet, self-defeated, had to be kept in home waters, as only by its presence could a free passage for the sailing of the submarines from our waters be maintained." This confusion in his mind seems to have persisted, for during the war he eventually adopted and pressed the unrestricted submarine campaign to which everything else was subordinated, and yet he repeats to this day his



original opinion—"Nothing indeed that could happen to our Fleet could be worse than its retention in idleness"; and he adds: "We were defeated by the old traditional English naval prestige . . . this prestige made our governors fear to send our Fleet to battle while there was still time."

Upon the evidence, then, of our enemies themselves, it is clear that Germany began the war without a naval policy, and carried it on, under the orders of the Army Command, by a series of desperate experiments, which were themselves the subject of continual and chaotic differences of opinion between admirals, generals, and politicians, embarrassed by the histrionic activities of the Kaiser. By one theory, a policy of raids would wear away the superiority of the Grand Fleet; but that superiority rapidly increased out of all proportion. Another hope lay in the depredations of fast cruisers on the British commerce that covered the Seven Seas; but in four months the last of these cruisers had been sunk. The submarine attack on warships began with one or two successes, but immediately lapsed into complete impotence. The U-boats were then turned against our merchant service, but this use of the submarine had not been foreseen; the twenty-seven boats with which Germany began the war proved utterly insufficient. The High Sea Fleet then attempted an attack upon our light forces. It met the Grand Fleet and resolved never to meet it again. After this an unrestricted U-boat campaign against all the world, combatant and non-combatant, was resolved upon; it failed to blockade England, but drew America into the war. And this, as the politicians, though not the militarists, could see, was indeed *finis Germaniae*.



## CHAPTER III

### THE COURSE OF THE WAR AT SEA

#### 1. 1914, AUGUST

THE Navy is our first line of defence. The Army, which was in fifty months of fighting to surpass all the most heroic records of six hundred years, could put into the field in 1914 no more than seven divisions. Beyond this we had for a European war neither troops, organisation, guns, rifles, nor ammunition. As the King's message told Admiral Jellicoe, it was the Navy which must "prove once again the sure Shield of Britain and of her Empire in the hour of trial."

To the Navy, therefore, it fell naturally to take the first precautions. When the moment came, it chanced by good fortune to be favourably placed for the purpose. As long ago as March 1914 a test mobilisation of the Home Fleets, instead of the usual manœuvres, had been ordered to take place between the 16th and 23rd July. Up to the very end of this week there was on our side no expectation of war. The German Navy was, of course, better informed. After the decision taken on July 5, "exhaustive conferences," Admiral Scheer tells us, "were held between the naval authorities in Berlin and the Fleet to discuss the various contingencies of war": that the annual

cruise to Norway was allowed this year he attributes to carelessness or an intention to show no nervousness—due in turn to a firm conviction of England's neutrality. On July 16 there was a chance of the German Fleet being crossed by the French President on his way to St. Petersburg. In the Admiral's eyes he was already an enemy. "We did not like the prospect of having to show him the usual courtesies on the High Seas—a salute—prescribed by international usage, so we drew ahead in order to avoid any chance of a meeting."

On July 23 the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia was launched with the Kaiser's vehement approval. On the 24th it was communicated to the British Fleet, and Sir George Callaghan, the Commander-in-Chief, immediately reminded the Admiralty that he was under orders to disperse his Fleet on the 27th. On the 26th the Serbian reply to Austria was rejected, and the Admiralty countermanded the dispersal of the Fleet. On the same day, Admiral von Ingenohl, who had rendezvoused his whole command at sea, explained the political situation to his flag officers and told them that England would probably remain neutral. He then ordered the Fleet to return, one squadron to Wilhelmshaven, the other two to Kiel for action against Russia.

On the 27th the British Fleet was reconcentrated and supplementary precautions ordered. These orders were quoted by Sir Edward Grey to Petrograd in order to remove the belief of the Central Powers that England would in no case intervene. On the same day M. Take Jonescu warned Prince Lichnowsky against hoping for our neutrality. "I know the English," he said, "no one in the world will be able

to prevent them mixing themselves up in a war provoked with so much injustice." Lichnowsky had been doing his best, but the next day, July 28, war was declared against Serbia. At 5 o'clock that evening the British First Fleet was ordered to Scapa Flow. It sailed next morning at 7 A.M., and later in the day the "Warning Telegram" was sent out to both Army and Navy. The High Sea Fleet was at this moment in harbour, fuelling and provisioning for war. On the 30th the Third Squadron, and on the 31st the Second Squadron with the Commander-in-Chief, passed through the Canal to concentrate at Kiel: the Baltic operation was given up. The final mobilisation order arrived on August 1, and was received with a burning enthusiasm, "worked up by the feeling of indignation at the oppression which British superiority had meant."

The British mobilisation was ordered the same day, upon the receipt of news that British ships were being detained in Germany on account of important naval manœuvres. On the same day also the Kaiser declared war on Russia. On August 2 he delivered an ultimatum to Belgium. On the 3rd he declared war on France. On that day Sir George Callaghan, whose period of command had really terminated a year before, struck his flag and handed over to Sir John Jellicoe the Fleet he had so admirably trained. On the 4th news came at 6 A.M. that the Germans would invade Belgium that afternoon. At 8.30 A.M. the Grand Fleet put to sea to prevent a hostile move by the enemy. At 9.30 the Foreign Office emphatically protested against the violation of Belgian territory. At noon the protest was rejected by the German Government and in reply an ultimatum was sent



to Berlin to expire at 11 P.M. To this no answer was received, but at 7.47 P.M. the auxiliary cruiser *Kron Prinz Friederich Wilhelm*, and at 9.30 P.M. the mine-layer *Königin Luise*, put to sea at top speed, to mine the English coast. The *Königin Luise* was chased and sunk next morning by the cruiser *Amphion* and two destroyers, but she had already laid her mines in the open sea. Eighteen hours afterwards the *Amphion* struck one of them and sank, carrying down some of her crew and most of the prisoners from the *Königin Luise*. Admiral Scheer thinks that this mine-laying was a proof of "a bold spirit of enterprise" and must have made an important impression on friend and foe alike. But the fact is that neither of the German ships ventured within thirty miles of her objective. A cruise by German submarines against our battleships on August 6 met with even less success. Of the ten boats sent out, one broke down and two were rammed by the *Birmingham* and another cruiser. The rest returned without sighting the British Fleet.

The first blow had now been struck on both sides ; the war policy of each of the great naval combatants had come into operation. The events which followed can hardly be understood and will certainly not be grasped in their full significance unless the whole area of the naval war is clearly visualised. For this purpose, nothing less than the map of the world will suffice. British naval interests are conterminous with the Seven Seas, and the would-be spectator of a war in which the British Fleet is engaged must have before him a chart such as the well-known Mercator's Projection, upon which they are all visible at once. Only if this postulate is granted will it



# THE WAR AREA AND THE BRITISH CRUISER NET.





become possible to watch the simultaneous development of the different campaigns, and so preserve the impression of complexity and power which would be diminished by any division into separate episodes. This is the more important because, as we have already seen, in modern war where whole nations are engaged, events have not merely a professional but a moral importance, derived from their immediate and general effect rather than from a knowledge of their ultimate bearing.

If we look, then, at the world map, and first at the centre of it, we shall see that the Central Powers were so placed as to have in war time no free access to the open sea. The Austrian seaboard on the Adriatic is completely flanked by Italy; and for a German Fleet, whether based on Kiel or Wilhelmshaven, the British Isles lie right across the way to the Atlantic. It was only necessary to close the two outlets—the one to the north between Norway and Scotland, and the still narrower one to the south between England and France—to confine all German shipping to the home waters of the North Sea and the Baltic; in other words, to annihilate her oversea trade and contain her warships. This was effectually done by placing the Grand Fleet in the Orkneys and the Channel Fleet athwart the Straits of Dover. Hamburg and Bremen immediately ceased to exist as commercial ports, and on the seas of the world the German flag was borne only by a single cruiser squadron destined to speedy destruction. Our strategy, then, was effective at once; but it was afterwards found possible to improve upon it. Scapa was too distant for striking an enemy who desired, above all things, to avoid action. The Forth was a better sea base,



and was afterwards used by the battle-cruiser and other squadrons. The Channel Fleet, on the other hand, was eventually found to be of less use in watching the Straits than for the purpose of the Atlantic Convoy and other services.

These were adaptations of the means to the end ; but the changes of German policy involved the successive abandonment of opportunities. Setting aside the Grand-Admiral's desperate theory of the value of a battle at all costs, the German Staff none the less expected an early fleet action, because they believed the British Admiralty to be determined upon an offensive under all circumstances. This, however, they hoped to entrap among the mine-fields and other defences of Heligoland. When the trap failed, they had still the chance of attempting to force a passage northwards into the Atlantic for their cruisers and battle-cruisers. Such an attempt could hardly have been entirely unsuccessful and might have resulted in very great havoc to our commerce. An alternative would have been a resolute attack on the transports conveying our troops to France, but for the High Sea Fleet this would have been entering a bottle-neck with the Grand Fleet behind them. Both these opportunities were therefore abandoned as too costly, and Admiral von Ingenohl substituted for them a policy of attrition, first by mines and submarines and afterwards by raids. Subject only to these occasional and momentary disturbances the North Sea remained under British control, both for military and commercial purposes.

The Mediterranean is the next sea area to claim attention. Here was the main French Fleet preparing to cover the transport of their African army



to France, a British fleet of cruisers under Admirals Milne and Troubridge, and a small German division—the battle-cruiser *Goeben* and the light cruiser *Breslau*—under Rear-Admiral Souchon. The *Goeben*, from her great speed and armament, was a dangerous enemy to the French transports, and she made an immediate dash for them on her way towards the Atlantic. She was headed off by Admiral Milne, who had received orders to assist the French. But England was not yet at war with Germany, and the *Goeben* could not be attacked. On August 5, when news came of the declaration of war, she was located at Messina. Admiral Troubridge, with *Defence*, *Warrior*, *Duke of Edinburgh*, and *Gloucester*, was watching for her off Cephalonia. Admiral Milne, with *Inflexible*, *Indefatigable*, *Weymouth*, and *Chatham*, was moving to bar the northern exit of the Straits of Messina. The battle-cruisers *Indomitable* and *Indefatigable* had been detached to search farther to the west. The *Goeben* had been under orders, on the strength of a supposed alliance with Turkey, to make her escape to the Dardanelles, but at Messina Admiral Souchon received fresh orders to make either for the Adriatic or the Atlantic. Finally, since Austria still hesitated to declare war against England, he was given leave to act upon his own discretion.

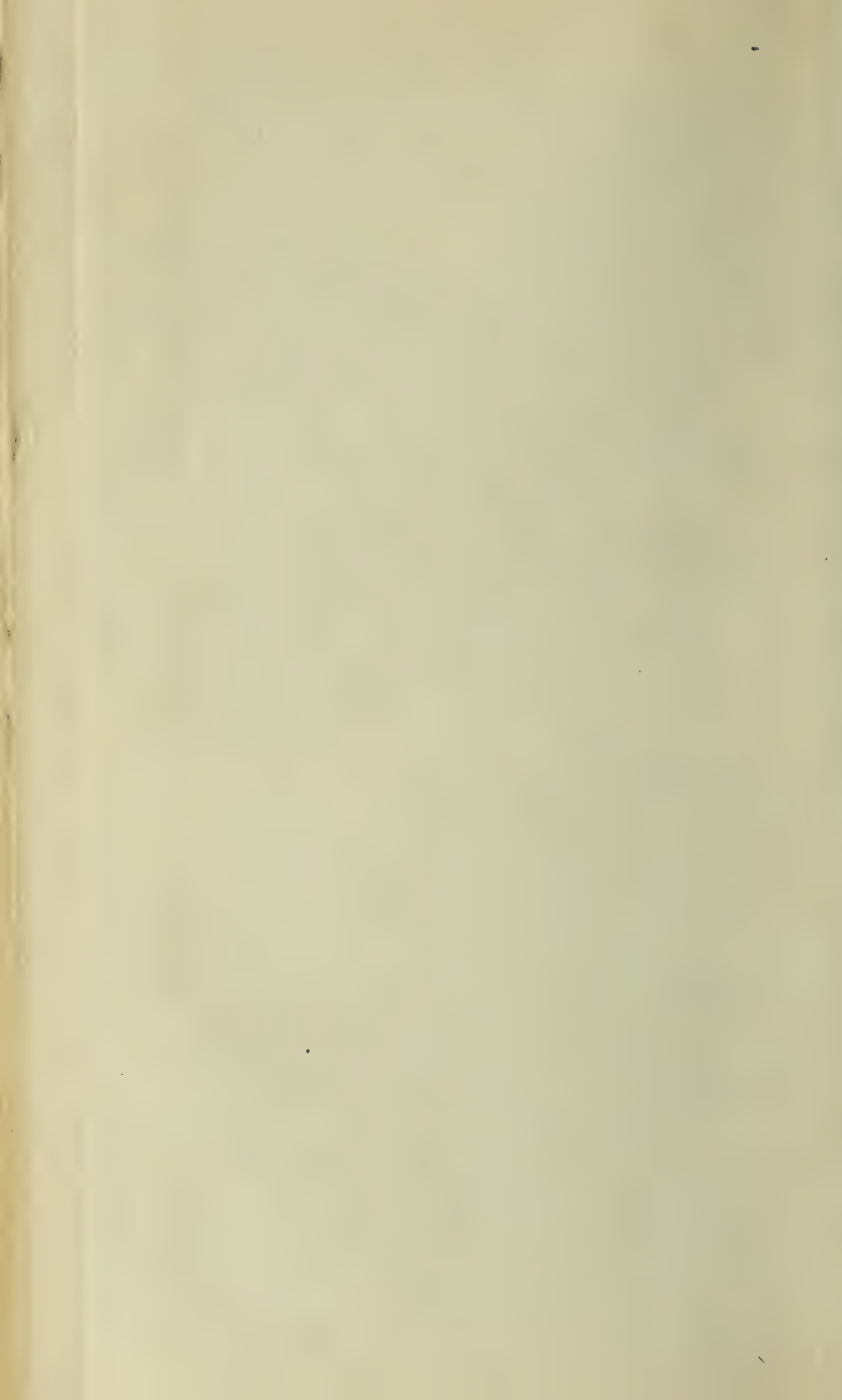
He chose to run for the Dardanelles. On August 6, at 5 P.M., the *Goeben*, with the *Breslau* five miles astern, stole away north as if for the Adriatic. She was immediately sighted and shadowed by Captain Kelly in the *Gloucester*. Admiral Milne received his wireless report at 6.10 P.M., but made back to the westward in order to bar the Malta channel. An order sent to him by the Admiralty to chase south

through the Straits of Messina did not reach him till midnight. It was midnight too before Admiral Troubridge could be certain of the enemy's true course. He then chased her for nearly four hours, and only gave up when he found that he could not bring her to action before daylight—he would then have been hopelessly outranged by her big guns. In the meantime Captain Kelly pursued the *Goeben* in the most daring style, crossing under her stern to get the advantage of position when the moon should rise. Shortly before daybreak Admiral Milne signalled him to fall back and avoid the risk of capture. He continued, however, to dog the enemy, and at 1.30 P.M. he opened fire on the *Breslau* in hope of bringing back the *Goeben* to her assistance, and persisted until the great battle-cruiser actually turned sixteen points and fired upon him. Captain Kelly then broke off the action, but continued his brilliant chase as far as Cape Matapan, where he was ordered by wireless to turn back. During this time Admiral Milne had coaled at Malta. He left again at midnight on the 7th, and though he was now without information as to the enemy's final course he passed into the Aegean and came near enough for the *Goeben* to hear his wireless. Admiral Souchon was then coaling at Denusa, and finding the chase was becoming dangerous, at daybreak on the 10th he ran for the Dardanelles as the nearest place of safety. In doing so, under the stress of dire necessity and without definite orders, he helped to bring about a train of consequences of the greatest importance, so important indeed that the mistake was afterwards made of attributing his move to a deep-laid policy. At the time British feeling was divided between exultation

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at the flight of so powerful an enemy and a more reasonable dissatisfaction at her escape. Admiral Troubridge was court-martialled, but honourably acquitted. Admiral Milne was recalled on August 12, when the command of the Mediterranean was left to the French. He, too, was exonerated on his return. "His failure," says the official history, "was due, at least in part, to the fact that, owing to the rapid changes in the situation, it was practically impossible for the Admiralty to keep him adequately informed."

On August 7, while the *Gloucester* was dogging the *Goeben*, the first battalions of the British Expeditionary Force were being passed over to France. During this operation, which was completed by the 23rd, the Straits themselves were held by the Dover Patrol in combination with the French Boulogne Flotilla. To the north of them were twelve British submarines under Commodore Keyes, and in front of these again the Harwich Destroyer Flotillas. To the south of the Straits was a patrol of five French armoured cruisers with four light cruisers under Rear-Admiral Wemyss, supported by Admiral Bethell with the Seventh and Eighth Battle Squadrons, behind which again, off Selsea Bill, was the Commander-in-Chief of the Channel Fleet, Sir Cecil Burney, with the Fifth Battle Squadron. This was a formidable combination, and the Germans made no attempt to interfere with it. They have since told us that they had no desire to do so, because they felt certain of annihilating our half-dozen divisions when once landed. But their failure during more than four years to interrupt the transport and supply of millions of troops is not susceptible of this explanation.

So completely in the dark was the German Admiralty as to our operations south of Dover that they could give no information to the Military Staff, and General von Kluck was not even aware that our Army had changed its base to St. Nazaire during the retreat to the Marne. By this time indeed their attention was called elsewhere. On August 28 a force of British marines was thrown into Ostend under cover of a cruiser force, and a sweep into the Heligoland Bight was planned for the same time. It was at first to be made by submarines and destroyers only, but Admiral Jellicoe was afterwards authorised, in view of a possible move by the High Sea Fleet, to add the light cruisers and battle-cruisers of the Grand Fleet. These latter, when they arrived, were not expected by the flotilla, and were in some danger of being attacked by them. Neither were they expected by the Germans, who, when the approach of our destroyers was reported, sent out decoys to draw the British flotilla in. By 8 A.M. Commodore Tyrwhitt in the light cruiser *Arethusa*, had driven in the decoys and was in action with the two light cruisers *Stettin* and *Frauenlob*. The *Stettin* was soon driven off by the *Fearless*, and the Commodore, though with only one gun left in action, succeeded in beating the *Frauenlob*. The British destroyers were now behind their prey and ready for the intended sweep westward. In three minutes it was seen that V 187, the German flotilla leader, was in the net. She doubled to and fro in vain, and by 8.50 was a dead and burning ship.

Commodore Goodenough now came in with his light cruisers in two divisions. Here again there was confusion. Commodore Keyes, in the *Lurcher*, a destroyer attached to the submarines, sighted *Notting-*

*ham* and *Lowestoft* and afterwards the other four light cruisers in the mist, and having no reason to suppose that British ships of that class were present, he signalled that he was being chased by four enemy cruisers. The cruisers, on the other hand, in carrying out their sweep came unexpectedly upon our submarines, and *Southampton* attempted to ram E 6. Lieut.-Commander Talbot saved his boat by a lightning dive and, guessing the mistake, refrained from counter-attack. In the meantime V 187 had been sunk, and her men were being rescued by our boats, when the *Stettin* reappeared and opened fire. Two boats belonging to the *Defender* were cut off and abandoned. They were saved, however, a quarter of an hour afterwards by the sudden appearance of the submarine E 4 (Lieut.-Commander Leir), who had diverted the *Stettin* by a torpedo attack, and now took the *Defender's* men on board.

The flotillas were then reconcentrated and the sweep continued with lessened hopes. Fortunately, however, the Germans attempted a counter-stroke: first the *Stralsund*, and afterwards the *Stettin*, attacked the *Arethusa* and *Fearless*. The *Mainz* engaged the 1st Flotilla and was driven off by the light cruisers, but in her retreat ran down upon the half-disabled *Arethusa*. She, in turn, was saved by the 4th Destroyer Division, which itself suffered severely, but also inflicted severe damage, the *Lydiard* stopping the *Mainz* with a torpedo hit.

In the meantime *Arethusa* had three times signalled for help, and two fresh enemy cruisers were now bearing down upon her from the north—the *Köln* and *Stettin*. At this moment of anxiety the huge forms of five battle-cruisers appeared suddenly out of the



mist at full speed. After an instant of deadly apprehension they were recognised as our own. Admiral Beatty had received *Arethusa's* signals, and, knowing that the whole of the German forces were within reach, he judged that "to be of any value the support must be overwhelming." He therefore dashed in with characteristic disregard of submarines and mine-fields, passed the light cruisers who were closing the disabled *Mainz*, and saved the gallant *Arethusa* and her destroyers. The *Stettin* made off in time, but the German Flotilla Admiral in the *Köln* was overhauled directly. His flagship was already crippled and burning when another cruiser, the *Ariadne*, crossed the bows of the *Lion* at speed and was shot like a running hare. Admiral Beatty left her sinking, circled back upon the *Köln* and sank her with her Admiral and all hands. By this time the *Mainz* had struck her flag and gone down, leaving 348 of her men in British hands.

It is probable that no more confused action was ever fought, or one more full of anxious moments for both sides. The fact that the British advanced forces were not fully informed of the revised plan of operations brought them more than once into a very awkward position, but the divisional leaders, by their presence of mind and by the tenacity with which they carried out their orders, made it possible for Admiral Beatty to strike at exactly the right place and time. The Germans, on the other hand, had no plan but a decoy movement undertaken in error. The throwing-in of single light cruisers afterwards, though their battle-cruisers were tidebound and could not support them, is defended by Admiral Scheer as necessary to save the flag officers from reproach



and the Navy from a feeling of inferiority. These may have been irresistible considerations, but they were dearly paid for. The British casualties were in all 35 men killed and 40 wounded: only the *Arethusa* and two destroyers were seriously hit. The Germans, besides the sinking of V 187 and injuries to other destroyers, lost an admiral and 1084 officers and men in the counter-attacking cruisers alone, and three of the four ships were sunk. This was a discouraging and even alarming result, and confirmed Admiral von Ingenohl's resolve to keep his fleet in harbour behind increased mine defences. For the British nation the success came at a singularly opportune moment, for it helped to efface the wildly exaggerated reports of the retreat from Mons spread by some of the less reliable journals of the day.

During these last days of August two other pieces of news came in, to understand which we must turn again to the map and pass beyond European waters. In looking at the vast spaces known as the North and South Pacific Ocean, the North and South Atlantic, the Indian Ocean, and the China Sea, we have to remember that there is not one of them whose coast-line is not to some extent the coast-line of the British Empire, and whose surface is not covered at every moment with ships passing between the different parts of it. These seas are free in time of peace for the commerce of all nations, in time of war for all but that which supplies our enemies. Against hostile forces the safety of our shipping is secured by a world-wide cruiser-net, made up of squadrons based on certain stations and patrolling certain definite areas. The greater part of mankind on land, including most Britons at home, live their lives in

complete ignorance of the power thus exercised. Nothing like it exists or has ever existed in the world, and if, in the story of these four years, we set aside the work of the Grand Fleet and the anti-submarine campaign, we shall find that the only heading left of equal interest with these two will be the cruiser-war, the incessant casting and drawing of the great cruiser-net.

Upon the outbreak of war the Germans had a priceless opportunity of sending out fast commerce-destroyers before our cruiser squadrons were in place. Yet one ship only, the auxiliary cruiser *Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse*, succeeded in stealing out into the Atlantic before the Northern Patrol was in working order. She passed south of the Canaries, captured four British ships, and then put into Rio de Oro on the west coast of Africa. This was reported on August 24, and the *Highflyer* (Captain Buller) was at once ordered to leave Admiral de Robeck's Ninth Squadron and reinforce Admiral Stoddart's Fifth Squadron in the area immediately to the south. There on the 26th he caught the raider off Rio de Oro in the act of coaling, and sank her after a sharp fight of an hour and a half. At the same moment Admiral Patey, with the Australian Squadron, which formed another mesh of the great net, was beginning to close upon the German possessions in the South Pacific. On the morning of the 30th he appeared off Apia and received the surrender of Samoa the same day.

## 2. 1914, SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER

When the month of September opened there was grave anxiety as to the fate of France and of the

British Expeditionary Force, which was still in retreat. At sea the prospect appeared satisfactory, but few could have foreseen the lessons which the Navy was to give and take in this and the following months. The German Admiralty, in place of the fleet action to which they felt hopelessly unequal, now began to develop their submarine offensive, and on September 3 achieved their first success. The *Pathfinder* (Captain Martin Leake) the flotilla leader of the Forth Destroyer Patrol, was torpedoed by the U 21 and sank in four minutes with nearly all hands. This gain was more than balanced by the loss of the German light cruiser *Hela*, sunk by E 9 (Lieut.-Commander Max Horton) early on September 14 only six miles from Heligoland. But it could not be expected that the submarine account between the two navies could be kept even for long, since the power in control of the sea was offering daily an immensely greater number of targets than the enemy. On September 20 the three cruisers *Cressy*, *Hogue*, and *Aboukir*, which had previously been employed on the Dogger Bank Patrol, were ordered to watch the area known as the Broad Fourteens, moving to the south at night and north again at daylight. At 6.30 A.M. on the 22nd the squadron was slowly steaming abreast, two miles apart, when the *Aboukir* felt an explosion on her starboard side and began to sink. Captain Drummond, supposing that he had struck a mine, signalled to the other ships. The *Hogue* (Captain Wilmot Nicholson) closed him at once and hoisted out her boats, but was herself struck immediately by two torpedoes. The *Cressy* (Captain R. W. Johnson) also had her boats out when at 7.17 she too was torpedoed twice. All three ships sank within three-



quarters of an hour. The boats, with the help of two Lowestoft trawlers and two Dutch steamers, saved 777 men and 60 officers; 60 more officers and 1300 men went down. The ships were obsolete, but the men were a serious and lamentable loss. We suffered here from a lack of precaution due to inexperience of submarine war: the German success, by their own account, was the work of a single boat, *U 29* (Commander Weddigen), which was ordered to the Straits of Dover and accidentally fell in with our cruisers on the way. Three weeks later, on October 15, the Tenth Cruiser Squadron were cruising between Peterhead and the Naze in line abreast at ten-mile intervals, when at 10.30 P.M. the *Hawke* was torpedoed and out of her company of 500 only 3 officers and 46 men were picked up. On the following day a German submarine was reported inside the anchorage at Scapa. The report was probably untrue, but the Commander-in-Chief promptly changed his anchorage until Scapa and Loch Ewe could be provided with more regular defences.

We must now leave the Grand Fleet and the submarine war, and return to the world-wide cruiser-war. From the fact that almost the whole of the events in it are comprised in the three months between September 10 and December 8, this campaign has the appearance of a mere episode, though one of tragic and triumphant intensity. But the true object of naval war is the control of the sea, which must be kept as well as achieved; and even after its brilliant successes in the first four months, the cruiser force remained, for the rest of the four years, a most vital and imposing part of our naval power.

It was on September 14 that the British public



first heard the name of the *Emden* as that of a German cruiser which had appeared on the 10th in the Bay of Bengal to raid our commerce. At the outbreak of war she had been at Kiaochau with the rest of the German China Squadron commanded by Admiral von Spee. To remain there would have meant falling into the hands of the Japanese, who had sent an ultimatum to the Germans on August 15; the Admiral therefore left for the Pacific, and having no coaling stations that he could depend upon, he divided his force. His two most powerful cruisers, the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, he kept among the Pacific Islands. Of his light cruisers, the *Leipzig*, the *Nürnberg*, and the *Dresden* were sent to the west coast of South America, the *Karlsruhe* to the Pernambuco area, while the *Emden* and *Königsberg* went westwards through the China Sea into the Indian Ocean. With the *Karlsruhe*, or near her, was the armed merchant-cruiser *Spreewald*, but she was captured on September 12 by the *Berwick*. On the 14th another auxiliary cruiser, the *Cap Trafalgar*, was sighted by the *Carmania* coaling at sea off Trinidad Island, and the first cruiser duel of the war was fought. The *Cap Trafalgar* was a large liner which had escaped from the River Plate and had taken on board naval officers, with two 4-inch guns and six pom-poms, from a German gunboat. The *Carmania* was also an armed liner, carrying eight 4.7-inch guns, but with no secondary armament. Both ships were of course entirely unarmoured. The action was begun on both sides with the utmost determination. The two ships closed one another and opened fire at 7500 yards, still closing. At 4500 yards it was seen that the *Carmania*'s salvos were taking effect on the water-line, while the *Cap Trafalgar*'s were

flying high among her adversary's masts and funnels. At 3500 yards the German pom-poms were effectively in action, and the *Carmania* was on fire under the fore-bridge and could not use her fire-engine, but Captain Grant, by circling completely round, brought his fresh broadside into action, and the *Cap Trafalgar* made off at full speed. It was too late; she was already a dying ship, burning and listing rapidly. She succeeded in running out of range for a quarter of an hour, then suddenly was seen to turn completely round and disappear head down. The *Carmania* had lost 9 men killed and 26 wounded; her fore-bridge, fire-control, and steering-gear were destroyed, and it was not without difficulty that she reached Abrolhos Rocks under escort of the *Cornwall* whom she had summoned to her assistance by wireless. Six days afterwards, on September 20, a very different action was fought between the *Königsberg* and the *Pegasus*, a much older and weaker ship, which was lying in Zanzibar harbour for repairs to her engines. The German cruiser opened fire at 9000 yards. The *Pegasus*, though outranged and unable to move, replied with her only available broadside. In eight minutes all her guns were disabled. The *Königsberg* also ceased fire, but reopened after five minutes, then suddenly turned and went hurriedly east again. The *Pegasus* had lost in all 86 killed and wounded, and when the survivors attempted to beach her she rolled over and sank. Theoretically of course she ought not to have been alone in an unprotected harbour; practically she had to take her chance for the moment, because the Indian convoy needed all our protecting force: and the Germans took their opportunity where they could find it.

The *Emden*, in the meantime, was playing the *Alabama* game brilliantly among our ships and ports in the Bay of Bengal. She had no base and no coaling stations, but supported herself entirely by her own exertions, living from hand to mouth on what coal and provisions she could take out of captured merchantmen. She was attended by an unarmed steamer, the *Markomannia*, and a collier; they could not get coal for her but they could carry the supplies she captured. It was evident then that she could only keep going on condition of always meeting a prize before her fuel ran out. The problem was to find and overhaul the prizes with as little delay and as little coal consumption as possible. For this purpose she made great use of wireless messages, sometimes warning merchantmen to change their course because the *Emden* was lying in wait for them on the ordinary route, sometimes telling them she was a British cruiser waiting to give them safe convoy, sometimes even sending out the S.O.S. signal as if she were a British vessel needing to be rescued from shipwreck. At times she also disguised herself with a dummy funnel, by aid of which she had evaded the Japanese cruisers at the start.

By these means she brought off three successful breaks: in the first, between September 10 and 14, she took and sank the *Indus*, the *Lovat*, the *Killin*, the *Diplomat*, and the *Trabboch*; on the 12th she took and released the *Kabinga*. On the 14th she sank the *Clan Matheson*—altogether 34,000 tons of shipping in five days. The net was quickly spread for her. The *Hampshire*, the *Yarmouth*, and the Japanese cruiser *Chikuma* were sent in chase, the *Minotaur* and *Ibuki* were posted near Sumatra and the Cocos Islands.



But by this time the *Emden* had made for Rangoon, and was holding up the traffic between India and Burma. From Rangoon she dashed across the Bay of Bengal to Madras, where on the 22nd she fired upon the city, burnt an oil-tank, and was gone again.

On September 29 she reappeared farther down the coast off the French colony of Pondicherry. On the 30th she passed down the Malabar coast and began her second big break. This time she took and sank the *King Lud*, *Foyle*, *Riberia*, and *Tymeric*, and she also captured the *Buresk* and *Gryfedale*, but sent the latter into port at Colombo after plundering her—a total of nearly 20,000 tons. Her third and last score was made before the middle of October, when she captured the *Exford* and *St. Egbert*, and sank the *Troilus*, *Clan Grant*, *Ben More*, *Chilkana*, and *Pon Rabbel*—seven ships of 32,000 tons in all. But her luck showed signs of giving out. The *Yarmouth*, which had been chasing her closely, on October 12 captured the *Markomannia* in the act of taking coal from the Greek prize *Pontoporos*. The *Emden* was now reduced to a single collier, the captured *Buresk*, and Captain H. W. Grant, with the *Hampshire* and *Empress of Asia*, was patrolling for her south of Ceylon. Captain von Müller chose this moment for his most audacious effort—his only attack upon ships of war. On October 28 the *Emden* was off Penang, where the port contained three French destroyers and the Russian light cruiser *Zhemchug*. At 4 A.M. she hoisted her dummy funnel once more and steamed into the harbour in the dark grey paint of a British cruiser. When within 1200 yards of the *Zhemchug* she torpedoed her and opened fire, ran down the harbour



and back, sank her with a second torpedo and salvo, and passed out, meeting the French destroyer *Mousquet* coming into port. The *Mousquet* made a fine little fight of it for seven minutes, and then sank. The *Emden*, seeing another destroyer coming out after her, ran off northwards under cover of a rain-storm. The fact that she was still at large on October 31 created a very interesting situation for the Australian troops, who were under orders to sail on the following day.

It must never be forgotten that the position of a navy is always that of a co-operative force. For an island power it may be the first line of defence, and in any campaign, offensive or defensive, it may be the largest force employed and the one without which no army could act at all. But since nations live upon land and not at sea, it is obvious that a war cannot be conducted and ended by a navy alone. Without the assistance of armies, whether native or allied, not even a blockade would be possible. In the late war we had from the beginning armies engaged overseas, and though they were at first comparatively small, our success was staked upon them, for in their fate was involved the fate of Western civilisation. The necessary co-operation of our land and sea forces was strikingly exemplified throughout the four years, but never more so than during the first October of the war, when the British Navy and Army may be said to have fought side by side in the same line, and upon the same battlefield.

The retreat to the Seine had ended on September 6; it was followed by the victory of the Marne and the deadlock on the Aisne. On October 2 began the race to the north in which the opposing armies

endeavoured to outflank each other. The Germans reached the coast at Ostend. The Belgians, after the fall of Antwerp, fell back upon the line of the Yser and formed the left flank of the Franco-British Army covering Dunkirk and Calais. On October 15 the German pressure was so heavy that the Belgians and French both requested that the Allied left should be prolonged and supported by long-range fire from warships.

The order was given at once to Admiral Hood, commanding the Dover Patrol, with the most fortunate results. The entrance to the Channel was left to the keeping of the Harwich flotillas stationed in the Broad Fourteens, and when news came, on October 16, of suspicious movements of German destroyers of the Emden Patrol, an offensive defensive was at once carried out against them. The ships employed were the new light cruiser *Undaunted* (Captain Cecil Fox) and the destroyers *Lance*, *Lennox*, *Legion*, and *Loyal*. On the afternoon of the 17th they passed up the Dutch coast and sighted four German destroyers of the Emden Patrol. "General chase" followed, in which the British ships rapidly overtook the enemy. In an hour from the start the *Lennox* (Commander C. R. Dane) and *Lance* (Commander Egerton) had disabled the boat on the right of the German line, and the *Legion* (Lieut.-Commander Allsup) and the *Loyal* (Lieut.-Commander Burges Watson) had wrecked the farthest on the left. The enemy's centre boats then turned back and fought a close action with guns and torpedoes in which they were, of course, completely overmatched. Their fight was a gallant one, but wholly disastrous. The four destroyers were all sunk, leaving the British

ships almost untouched and with only one officer and four men wounded altogether.

On the 18th the German Army attacked, but by this time Admiral Hood was in position off Nieuport in his flagship the *Attentive* with *Adventure*, *Foresight*, and *Sapphire*, four destroyers and the three monitors, *Mersey*, *Severn*, and *Humber*, with some French destroyers. By the fire of this force the German advance on Lombartzyde was completely beaten off. On the 10th the monitors opened fire again with good results, and some old gunboats and obsolete cruisers were brought up—*Hazard*, *Bustard*, *Vestal*, *Rinaldo*, *Wildfire*, and *Sirius*. On the 20th the Germans attacked again, bringing heavy batteries into action. One of these was knocked out by the monitors; in order to divert the fire of the other, Admiral Hood himself in the *Amazon* led a force of eleven destroyers inshore at full speed. His fire was effective, but the *Amazon* herself was hit several times and had to leave the line. That night the Belgians evacuated Lombartzyde and on the 21st Admiral Hood opened fire upon it and upon the German trenches. This day the ships fired for eleven hours continuously, and the enemy's advance was held up. On the 22nd the Germans abandoned Lombartzyde and entrenched west of the Yser. On the 23rd the Belgians reoccupied Lombartzyde and the attack died down, leaving the Allied left unturned. M. Emile Vandevælde, the Belgian Minister, wrote afterwards that "the intervention of the British Fleet during the height of the battle afforded the defence a most efficacious support. . . . For an hour we watched them shooting miles inland, taking the German trenches in reverse, destroying their batteries, and making any advance on



that side impossible." But by the 26th the enemy had reoccupied Lombartzyde and was attacking again. This time Admiral Hood led his squadron in the *Venerable*, an old battleship with 12-inch guns. In one hour he broke the heart of the attack and the Germans found it necessary to turn most of their heavy batteries seaward. But they were finally defeated by the Belgian engineers flooding the dykes, and by the end of the month they were abandoning their position west of the Yser. During this week the Indian troops had arrived, the German rush for Calais had been beaten off at Givenchy by Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, and Sir Douglas Haig had foiled the Kaiser at Gheluvelt in the crisis of the First Battle of Ypres. The Navy had struck a heavy blow at what was perhaps the most dangerous moment of the whole war on the Western front.

It was during this tremendous climax that two naval events occurred which caused great anxiety to the British Government. They both of them for different reasons escaped, or almost escaped, public attention at the moment. On October 27, while the Second Battle Squadron was putting to sea from the Mull anchorage for battle practice, the dreadnought *Audacious* struck a mine laid a few days before by the Norddeutscher liner *Berlin*, armed and fitted as a mine-layer. She struggled on in a heavy sea, and the White Star liner *Olympic* took off her crew and tried to tow her, but she steadily settled down, and at the end of twelve hours suddenly blew up and sank. In spite of the fact that her condition had been visible to a number of ships and several thousand people, some of whom had even photographed her from the deck of the *Olympic*, the Cabinet, at Admiral



Jellicoe's request, decided to suppress the news of the disaster. Of all the concealments of the war this was the one most keenly resented and ridiculed. It is understood that the decision was taken for two reasons. If the first of these was a fear that the High Sea Fleet might seize the opportunity to move against our forces on the Belgian coast, it can only be pronounced a serious error of judgement. Admiral Jellicoe was quite as well aware as Admiral Scheer that for the High Sea Fleet to enter the Channel with the Grand Fleet behind it would be inviting destruction, and the loss of a single ship could not have made the British Fleet incapable of taking advantage of such a move. It is probable that another consideration, a political and not a naval one, weighed far more heavily than this. Admiral Souchon at Constantinople was intriguing to draw Turkey into the war against Russia. The Turk has a weakness for battleships, of which he understands less than nothing. He would have been greatly impressed by the destruction of a new dreadnought, the first to be sunk in war, and the news might have moved his cautious mind to a decision. But even this reason for secrecy could only have operated during a few days, for on October 29 Admiral Souchon used the *Goeben* and *Breslau* to force the position, as Sir Louis Mallet had already warned his Government he would probably do. The two German ships, with the Turkish cruiser *Hamidieh* and some destroyers and mine-layers, made a highly provocative raid upon the harbours of Sevastopol, Odessa, and Novorossisk. At Sevastopol Admiral Souchon in the *Goeben* succeeded in making the Russian Fleet fire the first shot. He had previously mined them in, but after he had bom-

barded them for a quarter of an hour, three plucky destroyers got out and chased him away with loss. When he returned on the 30th Sir Louis Mallet presented an ultimatum and the Turkish Cabinet passed a resolution of neutrality. But this was ineffectual to prevent the Russian Government from declaring war, which they did immediately without consulting any of their allies.

### 3. 1914, NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER

In the history of the British Empire there can have been but few days so fateful as November 1, 1914. On that day the Germans began the final attack on the British First Army which ended ten days later in the destruction of the Prussian Guard. On that day the Russian, French, and British ambassadors left Constantinople and Admiral Carden was ordered to bombard the outer forts of the Dardanelles. On that day the great Australian convoy sailed for Europe, and on that day a British Admiral and two ships went down in the Battle of Coronel. It is with the last of these events that we have now to deal. There are questions involved which must be more fully dealt with in a later chapter, but the story of the action itself can be shortly told. As we have seen, there was at the beginning of the war but one considerable force to be enveloped and destroyed by the British cruiser-net, namely, the German China Squadron under Admiral von Spee. His detached ships had already been located and the hunt was up; but the admiral himself, with the larger part of his squadron, was all but lost to sight in the vast spaces of the Pacific. On August 12 he was at Pagan Island,

from the 19th to the 22nd he was in the Marshall Islands : his detached ships were heard of from time to time on the coast of South America, but he himself might well be intending to break westwards into the Indian Ocean, as the *Emden* actually did. He was, in fact, moving on Samoa, but he moved too late. He appeared there on September 14 to find Apia in the hands of the New Zealanders and not a ship in harbour. He left again for Suvarov Island, coaled in the Society Islands, and on September 22 bombarded the French capital Papiet  and sank an empty gunboat, thus for the second time revealing his whereabouts. Early in October it seemed probable from this and other evidence that he was making for the South American coast, and possibly intending to pass through the Magellan Straits and attack British trade on the eastern side. The force behind him in the Pacific was Japanese, the force in front of him was a British squadron under Admiral Sir Christopher Cradock, who had been ordered southward to anticipate his move. In view of a possible concentration of the German forces, the British squadron was inadequate and Cradock asked and obtained reinforcements. The great distance at which he was operating made the question of these reinforcements and of the instructions to be given very difficult both for the Admiralty and the commander of the squadron, and we shall attempt later to make the details clear. The actual result was that Cradock, after concentrating at the Falklands, received his first reinforcement in the shape of the *Canopus*, an old battleship of only 12 knots speed, but armed with 12-inch guns. She was a week late in arriving and Cradock, in his anxiety to forestall the German admiral, sent her alone



through the Magellan Straits while he himself, with his weak squadron, boldly took the risk of passing round Cape Horn, to make more sure of barring his enemy out of the Atlantic.

By this time Admiral von Spee had spent six days concentrating at Easter Island, and was making for the island of Mas-a-fuera, 500 miles west of Valparaiso. On October 26, Cradock, now on the west coast, finding the *Canopus* too slow for the purpose of his search, ordered the *Defence* to join him from the east coast; but in the meantime he sailed northward on the 30th in search of the *Leipzig*, which he believed to be in front of him, operating alone. Unfortunately the *Canopus* had to be left behind for twenty-four hours to repair her machinery and follow when she could. The two squadrons, British and German, were now, without knowing it, on the point of meeting each other. Their force was as follows: Admiral von Spee in the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* had two powerful ships each armed with eight 8-inch guns and six 6-inch; and their gunners were of high repute. His other ships, the *Leipzig*, the *Dresden*, and the *Nürnberg*, were light cruisers, each carrying ten 4-inch guns. Against these Cradock had the *Good Hope*, a twelve-year-old cruiser of 14,000 tons armed with two 9.2-inch guns; the *Monmouth*, another old cruiser with 6-inch guns only; the *Glasgow*, a light cruiser with two 6-inch and ten 4-inch guns, and the auxiliary cruiser *Otranto*, which was not sufficiently armed to take part in an action.

While Cradock believed himself to be chasing the *Leipzig* only, Spee was under the same impression with regard to the *Glasgow*, which had been sent on to Coronel with a cable message. She rejoined her



squadron at 2.30 P.M. on November 1, and at 4.40 sighted and reported to Admiral Cradock the *Scharnhorst*, *Gneisenau*, and *Leipzig* visible to the east. The *Dresden* and *Nürnberg* were in fact also present, but out of sight. Cradock had but a few minutes in which to decide upon his course of action. He does not seem to have hesitated. At 5.10 he concentrated his squadron in the direction of the enemy and attempted by crossing him to gain the inshore position, where he would have been at an advantage with the coast-line behind him. The German admiral, however, successfully kept away, and at 6.18 Cradock made a wireless signal to the *Canopus* giving his position, and adding: "I am going to attack enemy now." *Canopus*' reply showed that she was then 250 miles away. The sun set at seven o'clock, and having now every advantage of light, the German admiral opened fire at 12,000 yards. The *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* soon knocked out the *Good Hope*'s forward 9.2 gun and set her on fire. *Monmouth* was also burning within three minutes. *Glasgow* was engaged by the *Leipzig* and *Dresden*, but was saved from destruction by the German smoke drifting towards her. The German ships could no longer be seen in the fading light: the British gunners could only fire at the flash of their guns. They hit the *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau*, but both *Good Hope* and *Monmouth* were continually on fire, till at 7.45 the flagship blew up with a tremendous explosion which shot flames 200 feet into the air. By eight o'clock *Monmouth* too was silenced and sinking by the head in the heavy seas: by the light of the rising moon the German ships could just be seen closing for a torpedo attack. The action being clearly over,

Captain Luce made the painful decision that it was his duty to escape with *Glasgow* and *Otranto*. *Glasgow* had been struck by only five shells of the six hundred fired at her, and was in a position to make use of her superior speed, which gave her the opportunity of warning *Canopus* of the danger towards which she was heading. Captain Luce steered north-west into the darkness, intending to turn south as soon as he was out of sight. The *Monmouth's* men were all crowded on her quarter-deck, and cheered the *Glasgow* as she went away. For those cheers alone they deserve to be held in remembrance among the heroes of the Navy. At 9.20 firing was heard again and seventy-five flashes were counted from the *Glasgow*—"No doubt," says Captain Luce, "the final attack on *Monmouth*." She went down, like the *Good Hope*, with all hands.

The news of Admiral Cradock's defeat did not reach England for some days, and in the meantime two other naval events had stirred public feeling. On November 3 a German squadron of three battle-cruisers, *Seydlitz*, *Moltke*, and *Von der Tann*, the large cruiser *Blücher*, and three light cruisers appeared off Yarmouth in the haze of early morning and opened fire on the town without effect. They also fired upon the *Halcyon* gunboat (Commander Ballard) and the destroyer *Lively* (Lieutenant Baillie-Grohman), the former of whom gave the alarm to Commodore Tyrwhitt. The fleets and flotillas from Scapa to the Channel were immediately set in motion, but by three o'clock when the different concentrations had taken effect, the enemy had fled home again. Incredible as it seemed at the moment, his raid, which looked like a belated attempt to disturb our operations on the

Belgian coast, was a mere "run-away ring," a demonstration intended to cause "fear and panic" in the east of England. It cost us one submarine, D 5, which unfortunately struck a mine: it cost the Germans an armoured cruiser, the *Yorck*, which was lost in returning through their own mine-fields.

Raids of this type, however futile, formed for the Germans part of their naval policy. The British Navy, on the other hand, was only twice during the war called upon to make an attack which had no military object, and by a coincidence the first of these fell upon the same day as the German raid. On November 3 Admiral Carden carried out the bombardment of the outer forts of the Dardanelles, which had been ordered on the remote chance of bringing the Turkish Government to its senses. The *Indomitable* and *Indefatigable* shelled Sedd-el-Bahr and Cape Helles, while the French battleships *Vérité* and *Suffren* attacked Kum Kale and Orkanieh on the Asiatic side. The Turkish casualties were severe, and Sedd-el-Bahr was blown up. The attack, however, proved not only futile but mistaken.

Now came rumours of the disaster off Coronel, but they were vague and seemed to leave hope that Cradock and his flagship had escaped and possibly run ashore. A few days afterwards the long and growing anxiety about the *Emden* came suddenly to an end. After leaving Penang she had picked up her collier, the *Buresk*, and gone south to attack the Cocos or Keeling Islands, where we had a wireless and cable station. These islands lay near the route of the great Australian convoy, but of this Captain von Müller knew nothing. Nor did he know that the Cocos station was in fact a trap for him. The staff



there had been given by Admiral Jerram the wireless calls of all British ships within reach, and when the time came, though the attack appeared to be successful, the trap closed instantly on the *Emden*. Before her boats could land, signals and cable messages had already been sent off, and when the ship put to sea again two hours afterwards the pursuer was already close upon her. The convoy had passed the islands in the night and was fifty-five miles to the north at 7 A.M. on November 9 when the alarm signal reached Captain Silver in the *Melbourne*. He had with him besides his own ship the *Sydney* (Captain Glossop), an Australian cruiser, and the *Ibuki*, a Japanese. The latter was a powerful ship, and her captain begged earnestly to be chosen for the honour of the fight. Captain Silver, however, felt that he could only spare the *Sydney*. Captain Glossop parted company at 7.10 A.M., and before nine o'clock his smoke had been already sighted by the *Emden*.

Captain von Müller, believing his enemy to be only a light cruiser, abandoned his shore party and ran out to meet her at once. In twenty minutes he had closed to 9500 yards and opened fire. The action which followed was a one-sided one, for the *Emden* had only 4-inch guns to the *Sydney's* 6-inch, and was not only smaller but several knots slower. Captain Glossop therefore had the range in his own hands, and his problem was not how to win, but how to win outright and with the least possible loss. He accomplished his task with perfect judgement, and his ship's company showed themselves, in the first action ever fought by the new Australian Navy, to be fighting men of a high class.

They were thoroughly tried. The *Emden* straddled



them at once, and made ten hits in the first half-hour, one of them knocking out the *Sydney's* No. 2 starboard gun; but Captain Glossop kept his enemy well behind on his port quarter while his gunners corrected their range with unshaken nerve. In ten minutes they were punishing the *Emden* severely: her range-finder was shot away and her steering-gear injured. The *Sydney* circled to port to rake her, and Captain von Müller, to avoid this, turned eight points to starboard, thereby bringing his port battery to bear. Finding himself still outranged, he then made a still sharper turn to port, doubling on his own track to head off the *Sydney*. Captain Glossop, seeing the *Emden's* fire slackening, allowed her to get within 5500 yards before he made his next turn—a sharp bend to starboard which increased the range again and brought his starboard guns into action instead of the port battery, which had been doing all the work. Captain von Müller followed by making a similar turn and giving his port guns a chance, but by this time the *Emden* was all but done. The shells from the *Sydney* were raising fires all over her and she was making no hits in return. At one moment when she was completely smothered in a cloud of yellow smoke the *Sydney's* men thought she was gone, and boats were ordered out, but she was soon seen to be still firing and the men ran back to their guns.

In the second half-hour the *Emden* had made no hits, and she no longer wished to close her enemy: she turned away to starboard and crossed her own previous track, making a complete loop. The *Sydney* did the same, bringing her port battery into play again with deadly effect. The two ships were now running on parallel courses. The *Emden* had lost

all her funnels and her foremast, and was badly on fire: she was no longer fighting; she was running for the beach on North Keeling Island. As she staggered in, the *Sydney* turned to port and ran in to within 5000 yards, giving her two final broadsides as she grounded. The action had lasted one hour and forty minutes.

Captain Glossop left her at once and pursued the *Buresk*, which he overhauled in fifty minutes. By four o'clock he had returned to the *Emden* whose flag was still flying. She was repeatedly asked to surrender, but refused to reply, and very reluctantly Captain Glossop ordered two salvos to be fired, after which Captain von Müller showed white flags and hauled down his ensign. It was now getting dark, and there were still survivors to be picked up, and the landing party to be captured. These last, however, had already seized a sailing-boat and escaped. The *Emden's* crew were rescued next day, to the number of eleven officers and two hundred men. The dead were stated to be seven officers and one hundred and eight men. The *Sydney's* casualties were only sixteen in all, of whom only four were killed, and the ship herself was very little damaged. The famous raider had done us much injury in her life, but little in her death. The net had closed upon her irresistibly.

It had also closed almost at the same moment upon her sister ship the *Königsberg*. This raider, since her affair with the *Pegasus*, had been hiding in the Rufiji River, where on October 30 the *Chatham* had sighted her masts sticking up above the palm trees some distance inland. The water on the bar was not deep enough for the *Chatham*, and her salvos only drove the enemy six miles farther upstream. There was

nothing to be done at present but to bottle her up. On November 10 the collier *Newbridge* was run in under a hot fire by Commander Fitzmaurice of the *Chatham* and sunk across the channel. The *Chatham*, *Dartmouth*, and *Weymouth* then mounted guard outside in turns until aeroplanes could arrive to spot for their guns. It was while these operations were in progress that a message arrived from Captain Fitzmaurice of the *Triumph*, reporting the fall of Tsingtau after a siege of two months in which he had co-operated with the Japanese. The German power had now vanished from the Far East.

During the four weeks which followed the only naval event of importance was the loss of the *Bulwark*, blown up at her anchorage at Sheerness. Then suddenly on the night of December 9 London was electrified by the news that three German cruisers, the *Scharnhorst*, *Gneisenau*, and *Leipzig*, had been sunk in action, and not only was this confirmed next day, but the *Nürnberg* was officially added to the list. This victory, which practically cleared both the Pacific and the Atlantic at one blow, holds from every point of view, tactical, strategic, and political, so important a place in the history of the war that it must be treated separately and in detail. This is the more necessary because the Commander-in-Chief's despatches were not only long in arriving from so great distance, but were not published in full during the war, and can only now, for the first time, be printed as they were originally written. In the meantime the story may be told briefly as follows. When the news of Coronel arrived the new Board of Admiralty, in which Lord Fisher was First Lord, decided to carry out a suggestion already made by their predecessors,



and detach two battle-cruisers to deal with Admiral von Spee. Admiral Sturdee, who had been Chief of the Staff, was appointed on November 9 to be Commander-in-Chief in the South Atlantic and South Pacific, and to take out with him a squadron consisting of *Invincible* and *Inflexible*, with the armoured cruiser *Carnarvon* and the cruisers *Kent* and *Cornwall*. He put to sea on November 11, and the expedition was so successfully kept secret that not only the British public, but also the German Admiralty, was in complete ignorance of it. The squadron rendezvoused at Abrolhos Rocks, a remote islet in the South Atlantic, and proceeded on its southward sweep with the seven ships spread out to extreme visual signalling distance, so as to avoid the use of wireless messages which might have betrayed their movements. Admiral Sturdee was making for the Falklands, where Port Stanley, defended only by the *Canopus*, lay open to attack by Admiral von Spee. To attack the islands was, in fact, the latter's intention, and as we look at the map of South America it is easy to imagine the converging course of the two squadrons making for what now appears to be an irresistibly pre-ordained meeting. On the west side the five German cruisers with their colliers are running in close formation down the coast of Patagonia, with victory astern and expectation ahead of them. On the other side of the ever-narrowing continent the British squadron, flung out in wide line, is netting the Atlantic from the coast-line to a distance of two hundred miles out to sea. On the morning of December 7 the outlook at the Falklands saw smoke streamers on the horizon. An hour later the *Invincibles* were off Port Stanley and the islands were saved.



Admiral Sturdee's first business was to coal, but the work was still unfinished when, at eight o'clock next morning, December 8, the German squadron was sighted. While the British ships were hastily preparing for sea, the *Gneisenau* and *Nürnberg* approached to shell the wireless station, and were fired upon by the *Canopus*. For a moment they seemed undecided whether or not to attack our ships at the harbour mouth, but their admiral recalled them and took to flight—a course which had no advantages, and must have been regretted by a brave commander.

At 10.20 Admiral Sturdee signalled "General chase," headed the line in his flagship, and took the two battle-cruisers to the front at full speed. The problem before him was that of the *Sydney* with the *Emden*, but in a much more complicated form. He had to engage a force which would probably scatter. He had to annihilate it if possible, and do this without impairing the fighting value of his battle-cruisers, which must be returned to the Grand Fleet immediately. He instructed his captains accordingly, with the result that, although the action developed into three separate fights and was contested with desperate courage, he achieved all his objects with complete success and with the minimum of loss.

At 12.20, after his men had dined, he closed the enemy's rear, and at 12.47 opened fire upon the nearest ship, the *Leipzig*. The *Leipzig*, unable to face the big guns of the battle-cruisers, turned away at 1.20 to the south-west with the other two light cruisers. *Kent*, *Glasgow*, and *Cornwall*, in accordance with orders already received, at once followed in pursuit of them, while the Admiral fought the main action against the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*. These two

ships were now compelled to accept battle, and at 1.30 they eased down and opened fire. The duel continued for more than half an hour, when they suddenly turned sharply away to starboard, and again made off at full speed. Half an hour later, the British gunners found the range again. The *Gneisenau* was badly hit and the *Scharnhorst* was set on fire ; another half an hour and the latter had lost all her funnels and her port guns. Clouds of smoke and steam were pouring from her. She tried to bring her starboard guns to bear, but suddenly listed heavily, lay down on her beam ends and disappeared, with her flag still flying.

Admiral Sturdee now turned all his guns on to the *Gneisenau*, who was soon in a dying condition. An hour after her flagship had sunk she hit the *Invincible* with a single shot, then suddenly turned round and stopped, listing heavily and burning all over. "Cease fire" was ordered, but she opened again and was again silenced. One of her two flags was hauled down, and ten minutes later she suddenly heeled over and sank.

In the meantime *Glasgow*, by clever fighting, had delayed the German light cruisers and enabled *Kent* and *Cornwall* to come up. The *Dresden*, instead of turning back to the help of her consorts, used her superior speed to run out of sight in the gathering rain-mist. *Glasgow* and *Cornwall* sank the *Leipzig* in a running fight of four hours. The *Nürnberg* broke away in the hope of outrunning *Kent*, whose nominal speed was a knot less than hers, but *Kent's* engineers were equal to the emergency, and, by feeding the furnaces with all kinds of wood, they brought her in four hours within range of her enemy. An hour and

a half afterwards the *Nürnberg* was a beaten ship, and at half-past seven she too sank. She had hit *Kent* some twenty times, killing four men and wounding twelve. The losses in the other ships were almost *nil*—two killed and four wounded in all. The enemy, on the other hand, lost two thousand men, of whom by far the greater number were killed by gunfire. Admiral Sturdee's ships and ships' companies were therefore practically unimpaired, and this immense difference between his loss and the enemy's is the most decisive proof which could be asked of his ability as a fighting commander. A still more striking aspect of his victory, which was completed not long afterwards by the destruction of the *Dresden*, is that by this one blow the cruiser-net completed the clearance of the Seven Seas within four months of the outbreak of war.

It was what the Germans have called "a victory without a morrow," and the only counter-demonstration which they could even attempt was one of no military value whatever. A week after the arrival of the news from the Falklands, their battle-cruiser squadron bombarded Scarborough, Whitby, and the Hartlepoons. At Scarborough they killed eighteen people, mostly women and children, and wounded seventy. At Whitby three were killed and two wounded. At Old Hartlepool, where we had a gunboat, two destroyers, and a territorial battery, great damage was done, especially among churches, hospitals, workhouses, and children on their way to school. Six hundred houses were damaged, and one hundred and nineteen people killed and three hundred wounded. The raiders were cut off by our battle-cruisers, but the fog thickened just in time to enable



Admiral Funke to make his escape. By a bare technicality he was justified in firing on Hartlepool, but his three attacks were in fact a massacre of non-combatants, and failed even in their intended effect of "fear and panic."

#### 4. 1915, JANUARY TO JUNE

The year 1915 opened with another loss of the kind described as unfortunate. At three o'clock on the morning of January 1, eight battleships of the Channel Fleet from Sheerness were passing down Channel in line ahead. They were steaming at an unaccountably low speed; they were unprotected by destroyers, and there was a bright moon. No better opportunity for a submarine could be desired, and there was in fact a U-boat lying in their course near the Start Lighthouse. Her torpedoes were probably fired at the ships near the centre of the line. They struck the *Formidable*, which was the rear ship, and she sank almost immediately, signalling to the rest of the Fleet to avoid the danger of standing by her. There was a heavy sea, and only three of her boats were successfully launched. In these two hundred officers and men were saved, with the assistance of Captain William Pillar, of the Brixton trawler *Providence*, who, for his courage and fine seamanship, afterwards received from the King a commission in the Royal Navy. This was a consoling incident, but the loss of the *Formidable* was none the less to be deeply regretted. After our experience with the three *Cressys* and the *Hawke* it was simply a gift to the enemy of a battleship, with her captain and six hundred men, without aim or advantage.



On January 24 the Germans attempted their third cruiser raid, possibly as an attack on our light forces, possibly with the intention this time of drawing our pursuing force into a trap among the mine-fields of Heligoland, which they had extended for some such purpose. The affair was ill managed from the first. Information of it reached the Grand Fleet on the previous day, and the British Battle-Cruiser Squadron, with the Third Cruiser Squadron, Light-Cruiser Squadrons, and destroyers put to sea after dark, expecting to concentrate at dawn. At 6.50 A.M., when the men had gone to action-stations, the southern horizon was seen to be already lit by gun flashes. The *Aurora* and other light cruisers had sighted Admiral Hipper's force off the Dogger Bank. It consisted of the battle-cruisers *Seydlitz*, *Moltke*, and *Derfflinger*, with the armoured cruiser *Blücher*, six light cruisers, and a destroyer flotilla. Daylight was now broadening rapidly, and as the British squadrons advanced the German battle-cruisers, which had been steering north, were seen to turn sixteen points and make for Heligoland at full speed. They were about 18,000 yards from Admiral Beatty's flagship, the *Lion*; the sea was dead calm, the visibility good, and if the German Admiral had from the first intended flight he had done the worst for himself by placing at the rear of his line the *Blücher*, a ship of 15,500 tons, armed only with 8-inch guns and of the inferior speed of only twenty-four knots. In the chase which followed, Admiral Hipper in the *Moltke* led the *Seydlitz*, *Derfflinger*, and *Blücher*, with his destroyers on his starboard beam and his light cruisers ahead. Admiral Beatty led the chase in *Lion*, followed by *Tiger*, *Princess Royal*, *New Zealand*, and *Indomitable*, not

directly in the wake of the Germans, but fine on their starboard quarter to avoid any mines which they might drop. The British light cruisers were on the enemy's port quarter, 14,000 yards to port of the *Lion*.

By nine o'clock *Lion*, *Tiger*, and *Princess Royal* were near enough to open fire at 18,000 yards. At the third salvo the *Blücher* was hit: the Germans replied, but without effect. At ten o'clock the *Blücher* was seen to be on fire amidships: the flames died down, but by 10.30 she was again being badly hit. Fresh fires kept breaking out and she was falling behind her fleet, who were clearly leaving her to her fate. At eleven o'clock she stopped. *Lion*, *Tiger*, and *Princess Royal* immediately passed her in pursuit of the *Seydlitz* and *Derfflinger* which were now both on fire. The slower ships, *New Zealand* and *Indomitable*, were some distance behind, and the *Blücher* was immediately engaged by our light-cruiser squadron, which dashed in to 14,000 yards and began bursting lyddite shell all over her. She replied to this attack with her only four remaining guns and managed to steam away again at 20 knots, burning in many places. The light cruisers then left her, and drove off a Zeppelin which was hanging over the Fleet.

In the meantime a single lucky shot had saved the German battle-cruisers from destruction. Shortly after eleven o'clock the *Lion's* feed-tank was damaged by a shell; her speed was reduced, and Admiral Beatty had to transfer his flag to the destroyer *Attack*, leaving the immediate command of the pursuit to Rear-Admiral Moore in the *New Zealand*. *Attack* immediately followed the chase, but when Admiral Beatty at 12.20 overtook *Princess Royal* and hoisted

# THE NORTH SEA.







his flag in her he found that the action was already over. Admiral Scheer attributes this to an attack by the German torpedo-boats supported by their light cruisers, but this is not a sufficient explanation. Admiral Moore, though he was still far from Heligoland, no doubt felt that his knowledge of the position and extent of the new German mine-fields was insufficient to justify him in continuing the pursuit further. He therefore brought *Tiger* and *Princess Royal* back to finish the disabled *Blücher*, which under *Tiger's* furious fire, seconded by a torpedo from *Arethusa*, had soon lain down on her beam ends and gone to the bottom. Of her surviving men some were saved: the rest were lost through the action of the Zeppelin, which apparently mistook the *Blücher* for an English ship and bombed the rescue parties and the survivors in the water. She seems then to have returned home and reported the sinking of the *Tiger*, a fiction which was believed for some time in Germany. The British losses were, in fact, small; the flagship alone was seriously hit, and her injuries were soon repaired. She had only six men wounded; *Tiger* had ten killed and *Meteor* four. The Germans, on the other hand, had one ship sunk and three damaged, with the loss altogether of more than 1000 dead and wounded. By Admiral Scheer's account the *Derfflinger* and the light cruiser *Kolberg* were but slightly damaged, but he admits that the *Seydlitz's* case was desperate. The first shell that struck her wrecked the whole interior of her stern and fired the reloading chamber. The flames rose up into the turret, down into the munition chamber, thence into a second munition chamber, and up again into the second turret. They were seen to blaze as high as a

house above the turrets, and the gun crews of both perished almost instantly. The ship was afterwards badly hit on her armoured belt and came home leaking and with a fierce fire raging on board.

If the result of the action was viewed with disappointment in England, in Germany it caused grave misgivings and a change in the Chief Command. The departing chief, Admiral von Ingenohl, was highly esteemed, says Admiral Scheer, by his officers, who regretted that he "had not been able to obtain any great results." The failure, he thinks, came from the fact that the responsibility of the Commander-in-Chief was "complicated by suggestions and instructions restricting the operation of his plans." The new Commander-in-Chief was Admiral von Pohl, formerly Chief of the Naval Staff. His view, as Admiral Scheer tells us, was "that the maintenance of the fleet intact at that stage of the war was a necessity. His plan was, by frequent and constant advances of the entire High Sea Fleet, to induce the enemy to operate in the North Sea, thus either assuring incidental results or leading to a decisive battle under favourable conditions to ourselves, that is to say, close to our own waters." These advances were to be made at every possible opportunity, and Scheer claims that six were actually made in the four months from February to May. Their exceedingly tentative nature is disclosed by the statement that they only reached from a hundred to a hundred and twenty miles from Heligoland. They never succeeded in sighting the British Fleet because they were unwilling to meet it on open water. "Admiral von Pohl considered that a big surplus of forces was necessary for an offensive of that kind, and if it

was available for the enemy it certainly was not for us."

He was further of opinion that the British Fleet would suffer most from U-boats and mines; but this policy had immediately to be given up in favour of the submarine campaign against commerce which Pohl himself had inaugurated, as Chief of the Staff, on February 4. The course of this and of the subsequent U-boat campaign will be more fully treated in a separate chapter; for the development of this method of warfare not only went beyond all anticipation of either combatant, but became in the end of greater extent and importance than any action of the High Sea Fleet could be. Its chief incidents in the first half of the year 1915 were the sinking, in circumstances of great atrocity, of the *Falaba* on March 28 and the Cunard liner *Lusitania* on May 7.<sup>1</sup> These acts caused intense indignation both in Europe and America, and in the end brought the retribution which might have been foreseen. The German submarine policy was doomed to failure from the first, because it involved the destruction, not only of British, but of neutral lives and shipping. Its success as a blockade measure depended, as Admiral Scheer perceives, "upon whether the neutrals heeded our warning and refrained from fear of the consequences from passing through the War Zone." The neutrals, however, as he complains, tried, despite all warnings, to break through again and again, so that the Germans were "forced" to carry out their declaration by sinking them. In Admiral Scheer's opinion, the danger which the neutrals ran was due to no German fault; it "arose from the difference in their attitude

<sup>1</sup> See *post*, pp. 202-7.



towards the two declarations of a war zone made by England and by Germany. *Never* did a single ship, not even an American, defy the British order. . . . On the contrary, the neutral ships voluntarily followed the routes prescribed by the English Admiralty, and ran into British ports." (He omits to note that by the British blockade, which was proclaimed on March 1, the only procedure adopted against the freedom of neutral trading vessels was that of taking them into port for examination: in no contingency were they threatened by us with destruction. The United States, however, perceived the difference between the two methods of blockade, and by their protests gave, says Admiral Scheer, "an extraordinary example of the Anglo-Saxon line of thought." It was this line of thought upon which, as upon a rock, the German Navy in the end wrecked its own honour and the German Empire.

The U-boat blockade was to take effect on February 18, and the attacks on our merchant vessels began punctually. Twenty-five ships, large and small, were sunk in the first forty days, but these formed so infinitesimal a proportion—less than one third per cent of the number passing through the war zone, inwards and outwards—that the campaign was regarded in England as a failure, and had no effect either upon prices or public equanimity. The Admiralty set itself to devise counter-measures, arming trawlers and patrol boats; the nation's resolve was daily intensified by indignation at the lawlessness and inhumanity of the new method of warfare.

At first, too, public attention was strongly attracted in a very different direction. On February 19 one of the most important and keenly criticised movements



of the war was begun by a renewed attack upon the Dardanelles. These famous straits, which form the principal defence of Constantinople, the heart and citadel of the Turkish Empire, have played an interesting part in English naval history. To threaten or force the passage of the Dardanelles had for more than a hundred years been considered the sovereign method for putting irresistible pressure upon the Turkish Government. Sir John Duckworth's expedition in 1807 may be described as a romantic success, but a military failure; the English people had remembered the romance but forgotten the completeness of the failure. Duckworth had proved that a squadron could pass through narrow waters defended only by obsolete forts and primitive artillery; but these had now been replaced by mine-fields, torpedo stations, and Krupp guns. The only lesson which still held good was the one which we had forgotten: that a fleet which has reached Constantinople without first securing the command of the Gallipoli peninsula is a fleet in danger of having its communications fatally interfered with.

It is not upon this ground that the policy was at first opposed. On the contrary, there were those who were willing enough that the attack should take place, provided that it was made by the Navy alone and did not necessitate the use of troops, which could not be spared from the operations then preparing on the western front. The "Westerners," as they were called, believed that as in France and Flanders we had the main force of the enemy before us it was there that all our resources should be employed to overwhelm him. There was, moreover, a certain body of naval opinion which took the same side for

a different reason. The attack proposed was not, they believed, feasible without strong military support, and a joint expedition for the purpose of a distant attack with no naval end in view they considered to be no part of the "sea affair." Yet a third view was that of Lord Fisher himself, who accepted the idea of a joint expedition, but strongly urged upon the Government that it should take the form of an invasion of the Baltic and the landing of a large army behind the German right flank and within striking distance of Berlin. This plan was of course not publicly discussed; it was a scheme for attempting to end the war by a hazard, in which the odds would be twenty to one against the gambler; and as the stake was to include not only a British army but more than six hundred ships, the nineteen chances of loss would almost all have involved the ruin of Great Britain.

Mr. Churchill's plan, on the other hand, was a much less dangerous one, and did not deserve the name which has been so often applied to it of "a divergent operation." The defeat of Turkey would have had, and was eventually proved to have, a direct effect on the main struggle. If it could have been achieved in 1915 it would have destroyed the power of Enver and the Young Turks, deprived the Germans of all support from the Turkish Army, set free the Russian exports lying out of our reach upon the shores of the Black Sea, and made possible the supply of munitions to the Russian armies. Besides these advantages, its political effect in the Balkans would have been decisive, and the Russian left wing would have been set free to complete the outflanking of Hungary and the invasion of Austria. The Grand

Duke Nicholas had, it is true, just defeated a Turkish offensive in the Caucasus, but the attitude of Bulgaria was a danger to his plans. As in the case of the *Goeben* and the French transports, Mr. Churchill was rightly eager to give assistance to an ally whether he asked for it, as the Grand Duke was reported to have done, or was only seen to be obviously in need of it. Finally, it must not be forgotten that the Turk had already made one attack upon the British force covering Egypt on the line of the Suez Canal, and was certainly intending to renew his offensive. A blow struck in the direction of Constantinople was the most effective way which could be devised for relieving all pressure on Egypt.

Looking back after the event, we cannot doubt that these advantages were not only valuable but attainable, if the necessary forces could be found for a combined operation. Unfortunately it was held that the troops could not be found, and Lord Kitchener's firmness on this point involved the fatal suggestion that the guns of the Fleet might be sufficiently powerful to do the work without them. Ambitious and over sanguine Mr. Churchill may have been, but it must be remembered that he saw a great opportunity before him; and when one of the two elements in his combination was denied him he sought and found naval authority for proceeding without it. It is most regrettable that he should have been thus tempted to disregard the teachings of history and the art of war. The troops could have been given him, in the end they were given him; he must often have regretted that he could not foresee in February what resources would be available in April. The successive bombardments by the Fleet alone were not only in



themselves a failure ; they exposed the British plan to the Turks and their German advisers, and warned them to convert the steep ridges of Gallipoli into a fortress eventually almost impregnable, and garrisoned by an army numbering, with its supports, 500,000 men. Even then its reduction was not impossible. It is the deliberate opinion of Sir Ian Hamilton, writing four years after the conclusion of his campaign, that there were days on which a reserve of fresh troops or a more liberal supply of shell for his guns would have made victory possible, and the unparalleled heights of valour and endurance reached by the Army in this contest lend a strong support to his belief. But in war a great undertaking, to be entirely justified, should be not only not impossible ; it should have a greater margin of probability in its favour than that measured by a single day's shell supply. The verdict of history will probably record that the Dardanelles Expedition was well conceived, but destroyed from the beginning by a difference of opinion ; that it was nevertheless initiated as a risk which could be well afforded in view of the immense value of the reward aimed at : then, when the first venture proved unsuccessful, fresh resources were staked again and again ; but they were found with difficulty, and it was only by an incredible combination of skill and good fortune that anything was saved from the final failure. But it is not likely that when the pain of disappointment and cruel losses has passed away there will remain any desire to condemn either the Minister responsible or those upon whom he relied for the execution of his design. Its miscarriage was in no way fatal to our cause. It was a direct and courageous blow that was struck. " There never was a great subsidiary opera-



tion of war in which a more complete harmony of strategic, political, and economic advantages has combined, or which stood in truer relation to the main decision in the central theatre." Of these advantages some part at least was gained, and the way was prepared for two campaigns elsewhere—in Palestine and the Balkans, one of which broke the power of Austria, while the other destroyed that of Turkey by the most perfect exhibition of the art of war ever yet witnessed. Finally, there was laid up, not only for Great Britain but for the Dominions of her Commonwealth, a record of valour which can never be surpassed.

The naval attack, then, was decided upon, and we have now to take account of the force at Admiral Carden's disposal and the positions against which he was to employ it. His fleet contained, first, the battleship *Queen Elizabeth*, the newest and most powerful in existence; she carried eight 15-inch guns, all of which could be used on either broadside: secondly, the battle-cruiser *Inflexible*, lately returned from the Falklands battle, with eight 12-inch guns: and, thirdly, a squadron of pre-dreadnought battleships, *Agamemnon* and *Lord Nelson*, with four 12-inch and ten 9-inch guns; *Majestic*, *Albion*, *Vengeance*, *Ocean*, *Prince George*, *Goliath*, *Implacable*, *Irresistible*, and *Cornwallis*, each with four 12-inch and twelve 6-inch guns; *Swiftsure* and *Triumph*, with four 10-inch guns and fourteen 7·5-inch guns. With them was a French squadron under Rear-Admiral Guépratte, consisting of the *Suffren*, with four 12-inch and ten 6·4-inch guns; the *Gaulois* and *Charlemagne*, with four 12-inch and ten 5·5-inch, and the *Bouvet*, with two 12-inch, two 10·8-inch, and eight 5·5-inch guns. The whole force was accompanied by a flotilla of

destroyers and the new seaplane carrier, the *Ark Royal*.

The forts against which this formidable artillery was to be employed had nothing like the same armament. Those to be attacked on the first day mounted only sixteen heavy guns, varying between 6-inch and 10·2-inch calibre. Under equal conditions, as in a fleet action, these could not have held out for an hour against the immensely heavier and more numerous guns in the Allied ships. But the forts were not only of masonry and earthworks more indestructible than any ship's armour; they had the still greater advantage of affording a much less visible target than a vessel clearly outlined against the sky and water, and a much better platform for their own guns. In a contest between ships and forts the naval gunner has every kind of inferiority but one. He can move his battery; but apart from the increased difficulty of firing at a stationary mark from a moving platform he has this disadvantage: his ship is vulnerable from one end to the other of her immense length while his own shot, to be effectual at all, must be practically a direct hit upon the gun of his opponent. That opponent, on the other hand, being stationary and far less vulnerable will be also less embarrassed in the ranging and service of his guns, and the splash of his shells in the water will give him what every gunner knows to be a great source of confidence, the power of spotting accurately the fall of his shot when he does not actually obtain a hit. The history of those engagements in the past, when ships have been matched against fortifications on land, shows conclusively that unless the skill and weight of metal are overwhelmingly on its side the naval force will certainly fail

and probably suffer a heavy defeat. In the present instance the disparity was no doubt great, and it is not difficult to understand Admiral Carden's confidence in the force at his disposal. But to establish an exception from a well-ascertained general principle, something more than confidence is needed. No sufficient allowance had been made for dangers other than those from gun-fire, and in the result the mine and the torpedo turned the scale against us.

When the attack opened at 8 A.M. on February 19 it was necessary to begin by a re-bombardment of the forts at the entrance which had been silenced in the previous November. A slow and steady fire was kept up from all the ships, except *Queen Elizabeth*, on Cape Helles, Sedd-el-Bahr, and Kum Kale, and for more than six hours there was no sign of a reply. On the report of his aeroplanes Admiral Carden could only believe that the forts were disabled, but when he shortened the range to make sure, fire was opened from all the forts. Not a single hit was made upon any of the ships, but when the fleet retired at dusk only two of the three batteries had been finally silenced. After an interval of unfavourable weather the attack reopened on February 25. On this day *Queen Elizabeth* brought her guns into action for the first time. She fired on Cape Helles from a distance at which the Turkish gunners were completely out-ranged, but for a short time they replied to *Inflexible* and *Agamemnon* who were nearer in, and succeeded in hitting the latter once before their heavier guns were silenced. Their secondary armament still continued to fire, but was crushed an hour later by *Vengeance* and *Cornwallis*. In the meantime, *Irresistible* and *Gaulois* were firing at Orkanieh on the Asiatic side.



The second pair of batteries at Sedd-el-Bahr and Kum Kale were now attacked at closer range. *Vengeance* and *Cornwallis* turned their attention to the latter, and on this side of the action the French ships, *Suffren* and *Charlemagne*, ran in to 2000 yards. On the north side *Triumph* and *Albion* adopted the same tactics against Sedd-el-Bahr, where the earth-works proved very difficult to destroy. It was not until five o'clock that all four forts were at last completely silenced, and the trawlers, which had been brought up for the purpose, were able to begin sweeping for mines.

Next morning, when the passage was reported clear for four miles, *Albion*, *Vengeance*, and *Majestic* entered the Straits to attack Dardanos, a fort on the Asiatic shore, this side of the promontory where the channel first begins to narrow. Here the ships were fired upon from several small batteries along the coast whose existence was previously unknown; but their fire and that of the fort itself was wholly ineffective. The attack seemed so far to be successful. The entrance forts were certainly now untenable, for they could be taken in reverse, and the Turkish troops which were sighted were driven off by shell-fire. Marines were then landed and the guns in the half-ruined forts were successfully blown up, but on the Asiatic side the enemy afterwards made a counter-attack and drove our landing party to their boats.

The news of these operations was received at home with ill-justified satisfaction. The British public, like the German though in a less degree, had been taught to take an inane pride in the material power of the armaments which scientific men had been paid to make for them. No great risks had been run in



this first stage of the Dardanelles attack, but it seemed easy to believe that all the forts would be crushed in turn, and there was general exultation. This was soon checked. On March 4 the fleet again entered the Straits. Dardanos and another fort, Soghandere, opposite to it, were bombarded, and once more a landing party of marines near Kum Kale were driven back after a severe fight, with a loss of nearly fifty, of whom more than half were killed. The number of Turkish troops available in this district had certainly been under-estimated, and on the following day Admiral Peirse was ordered to create a diversion by bombarding the outer forts at Smyrna. On the same day operations were begun against the great forts at the Narrows, which formed the most formidable land defences of the channel. The attack was not made in force, but one of the group of forts at Kilid-Bahr was put out of action by the explosion of its magazine. On the following morning, March 6, a well-designed and carefully prepared attack was made. The forts of Dardanos and Soghandere had to be silenced afresh; for this purpose *Vengeance*, *Albion*, *Majestic*, *Prince George*, and *Suffren* were detailed, and the action proved serious enough to show how complete had been the failure two days before. The Turkish gunners hit the ships repeatedly, and though none of their shells were of more than 6-inch calibre, and we suffered no serious damage or casualties, it was discouraging to find that so much of the work had to be done again and again.

But the chief interest of the day was directed to the simultaneous attack on the two great forts at Chanak on the Asiatic side, opposite Kilid-Bahr. Their 14-inch guns, trained upon the Narrows and

right down the main channel, were formidable in the extreme, but it was proposed to attack them from a point out of sight with high-angle fire to which they could not reply. For this purpose *Queen Elizabeth*, *Agamemnon*, and *Ocean* took station off Gaba Tepe in the Gulf of Saros on the outer or western side of the peninsula, and fired at a range of over 20,000 yards over the whole mass of the hills and ridges of Gallipoli. The spotting was done by aeroplanes and the gunners made good practice, but Chanak was not destroyed, and the ships were fired upon from the western slopes by heavy guns and howitzers which had all the advantage of position, and succeeded in hitting *Queen Elizabeth* three times. The results of the day were stimulating rather than encouraging.

On the following day fresh tactics were adopted. The *Agamemnon* and *Lord Nelson* attacked Fort Chanak from a position inside the Straits and at a range of 14,000 yards. The French ships, *Bouvet*, *Gaulois*, *Charlemagne*, and *Suffren*, in advance of them but farther to the east, fired upon Dardanos and silenced it once more, but on this day the big guns of Chanak opened fire in reply and succeeded in hitting the *Gaulois*, *Agamemnon*, and *Lord Nelson*. Not only was the action once more inconclusive, but it was found next day that the Turks had returned to Morto Bay near Sedd-el-Bahr, and had mounted new guns near the forts which we had destroyed. On March 10 and 11 therefore this ground had to be once more made good by a fresh bombardment, and an attempt was made at the same time to shell the lines of Bulair, the Turkish position to the north-east at the neck of the peninsula. Five days afterwards the newspapers reported that the light cruiser *Amethyst*

had actually run through the Narrows and returned in safety. Even if she had done so the problem, as we can now see, would have been no nearer solution, but the report was only very partially true. *Amethyst* had made but a small advance. She had not succeeded in passing out of the range of the forts : her commander's skill and daring had only brought his ship back with serious casualties.

At this point Admiral Carden's health failed and compelled his retirement from the command. He was succeeded by Admiral de Robeck, whose first task was to organise his powerful squadrons for a general attack on the whole position. This was put in force on March 18, a day of light airs, calm sea, and high visibility. The action was begun at a quarter to eleven by *Queen Elizabeth*, *Inflexible*, *Agamemnon*, and *Lord Nelson*, who opened a long-range fire on the forts at the Narrows, while *Triumph* and *Prince George* slightly in advance of them attempted once more, from the eastern bay, to silence Soghandere, Dardanos, and the batteries beyond on Kephez Point. All these forts had come to life again, and, as before, their chorus was joined by unlocated howitzers on the slopes above. After an hour and a half's hot firing the *Bouvet*, *Charlemagne*, *Gaulois*, and *Suffren* passed through and closed the nearer forts. The Turkish gunners ceased fire under the storm of the ten broadsides, and a second British squadron came up, as arranged, to attack the Narrows, the four French ships passing down into the broader, or more southern part of the bay to make room for them. At this moment, with sixteen ships crowding within range of them, the Turks manned the Kilid-Bahr and Chanak guns again and re-opened fire. They succeeded in



hitting the *Gaulois*, the *Inflexible*, and the French flagship *Bouvet* which was leading the retiring line and was therefore the farthest away. An explosion followed in the *Bouvet*; she heeled over and sank in three minutes, carrying down the greater part of her crew. It was believed, at the moment, that her magazine had been exploded, but the truth soon appeared—the Turks were floating drift-mines down the rapid current into the bay below crowded with ships. It was *Irresistible's* turn next. At 4.45 she, too, was mined opposite Soghandere and sank at 5.50, though her crew were saved by the good work of the destroyers under a hot fire. At 6.5 a third mine came down upon *Ocean*, who was lying off the Asiatic shore below Kephez. She sank almost immediately, but her men, too, were nearly all saved by the destroyers. The rest of the ships were withdrawn at sunset, leaving the defence still unsubdued. The old action of fleet against forts had been tried once more; the decision was in accordance with the precedents; the costs of the losers were three battleships and more than a thousand men.

It was now clear that the enterprise could not go forward without the co-operation of an army. The forts at the Narrows and beyond were all commanded by the Pasha Dagħ, a plateau 600 feet above Kilid-Bahr, and would be at the mercy of an army which could succeed in planting its heavy artillery there. It was a position very difficult of approach, for it was protected on all sides by higher ground and covered on our side by the hill of Achi Baba. The only road available runs along and round all these positions from Sedd-el-Bahr to the fort of Maidos; this marked the obvious line of attack, but the difficulty was to



place the troops on it. There are but few possible landing-places among the steep cliffs which face the sea. Sir Ian Hamilton, the General who was to command the expeditionary force, decided to use the beaches at and near Cape Helles for one landing, and to attempt another at Gaba Tepe on the west coast in rear of the Kilid-Bahr plateau. The two forces might then succeed in effecting a junction and encircling the Turkish Army on the heights. For this purpose an army of 120,000 men was formed, by bringing together the Twenty-ninth British Division, the Naval Division, the Australian and New Zealand Divisions, a territorial division from Egypt, with some Indian troops, and to these the French added their Foreign Legion with some Fusiliers Marins and colonial troops under General Gouraud. This was a large force and proved itself to be of fighting quality beyond all example. Even for so difficult an enterprise it would almost certainly have been sufficient if it could have been adequately supplied with reinforcements and munitions, but, as we have seen, those in authority were not unanimous. The military chiefs, British and French, were still for devoting all their resources to an offensive which was to end the war on the western front. It was a sound principle to allow of no divergence from their main object, but it is clear that they should either have refused to sanction the Gallipoli Expedition or at the crucial moment they should have found the means for pushing it to success. There were, too, elements of policy involved ; if we had been free to deal as they deserved with the Hohenzollern influences in Athens an excellent Greek army would have been at our disposal from the first.

The landing, which took in all three days, began on April 25 at daybreak, when the Australians under cover of destroyers leapt from their boats on the beach under Sari Bair (afterwards called Anzac Cove) and stormed the cliffs under a hot fire. Two hours later the cruisers *Amethyst* and *Sapphire* and the battleship *Goliath* at Beach Y, and the battleship *Implacable* at Beach X covered successful British landings, while at Beach S the troops got ashore from trawlers with little opposition. Beach W proved at first impregnable, but was carried at the second attempt under the fire of *Euryalus*, and at Beach V under Sedd-el-Bahr the struggle was perhaps more desperate than any of a similar kind in British military history. The position was known to be strongly held and entrenched, and for putting the storming party ashore the open boats were supplemented by a vessel which has been very aptly compared to the Trojan horse. This was the *River Clyde*, a collier with doors cut in her sides through which, when she had been run ashore, the 2000 troops within her ribs could make their way to land over a bridge made of lighters. This ship was prepared by Commander Edward Unwin, R.N., who took her in, grounded her, and ran out the lighters. Some of these, however, got out of position and a gap was left over which it was impossible for men to cross. Those who tried to wade ashore were cut down by Turkish machine-guns, and the landing was, for the moment, held up. Commander Unwin, standing up to his waist in water and assisted by Midshipmen G. L. Drury and W. St. A. Malleson, Able Seaman W. C. Williams and Seaman G. M. Samson, succeeded in getting the lighters into position by an effort of desperate valour and energy which earned for them

all the Victoria Cross. But the bridge, when made, was impassable under the fire directed upon it, and the men in the *River Clyde* had to wait for darkness before they could join the small number of their comrades who had heroically made good their footing on the beach. The fight continued next day under cover of *Albion's* guns until 1.24 P.M., when the troops stormed and took Hill 141 which dominated the position. The gallantry and perseverance of the officers and men of both services in this landing are described by Admiral de Robeck as bordering on the miraculous, and he adds that the co-operation between Army and Navy was most happy; this and their absolute contempt for death alone made the operations possible.

In the meantime the French, after a heavy bombardment, had thrown the whole of their force ashore at Kum Kale. Their landing had the very important effect of preventing the enemy shelling our transports off Helles from the Asiatic side. But when this object had been achieved and their advance was found to be strongly opposed, they were successfully withdrawn on the 26th, taking with them four hundred Turkish prisoners. On the same day the Australians were heavily counter-attacked, and the force on Beach Y was outflanked and forced to re-embark. On the 27th began the now urgent business of landing supplies, which was done under an incessant barrage of shell and shrapnel. The ships' guns replied effectively, and *Queen Elizabeth*, with a sea-plane spotting for her, fired again over the hills at a range of 16,000 yards, and sank at the third shot a Turkish transport bringing reinforcements. On the 28th she supported with 15-inch shrapnel shell the



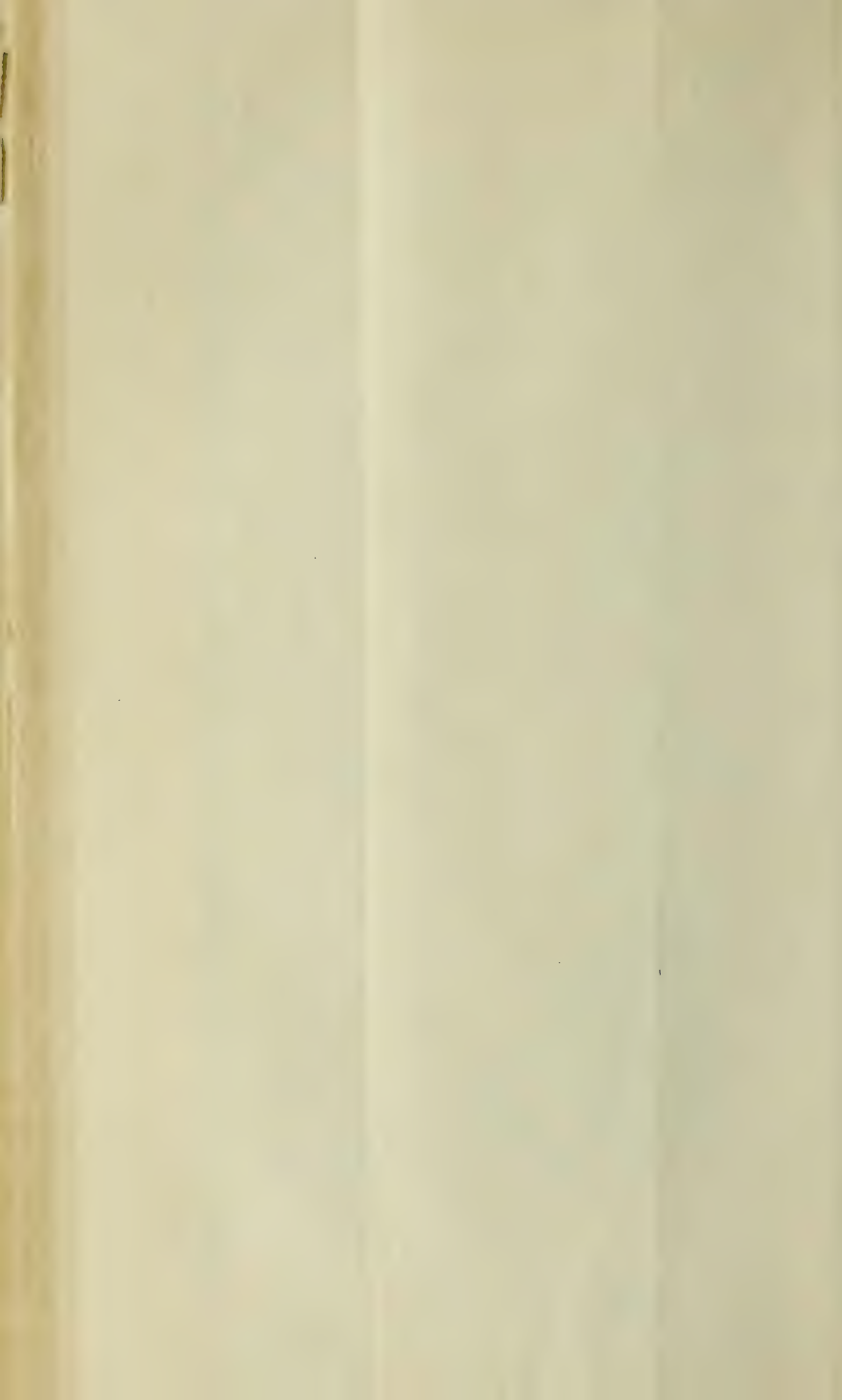
Anglo-French advance to a line near the village of Krithia.

The land attack having once begun, the work of the Navy had now to include keeping up our own supply service and hampering that of the Turks. For the latter purpose a campaign of almost incredible difficulty and daring was undertaken by our submarines, and achieved a success which will always remain one of the romances of the war. It forms, like the Baltic submarine campaign of the same year, so remarkable a proof of the superiority of our service and so typical a contrast of its spirit with that of the German U-boat campaign, that a detailed account of the operations of every one of our boats will be given in a later chapter. The narrative shows that from the last days of April, when the Australian submarine A.E. 2 and the British submarine E 14 passed successfully through all the dangers and obstructions of the Dardanelles, until the Gallipoli Expedition ended in December, the Sea of Marmora was rendered unsafe, and the Turkish supplies and reinforcements, after severe losses, were diverted to a longer line of communications either by Bulair or by the Asiatic shore and the ferries across the Narrows. The battleships and cruisers in the meantime were being used, as some of them had already been used on the Belgian coast, to prolong the flanks of the Army and cover its attacks. In so doing they necessarily ran great risks, for they were not here in the open sea but in confined waters, very clear and smooth, where a submarine would have every facility for attack and less than the ordinary danger to fear from destroyer patrols. The precariousness of our position was revealed when on May 12 the battleship



# THE DARDANELLES.





*Goliath*, which had been employed in covering the French flank near the mouth of the Straits, was struck by a torpedo after dark and sank in four minutes. The blow came from a Turkish destroyer which had crept down unperceived in the darkness and got away again without being brought to action. Within a fortnight afterwards the German submarine U 51 was at work off Gallipoli. On May 26 the battleship *Triumph* was in the Gulf of Saros supporting an Anzac attack. She had her torpedo nets out and was accompanied by destroyers, but she was moving very slowly, by the necessity of her service, and offered an easy mark for a long shot. A single torpedo passed through her nets and struck her full amidships. She sank rapidly, but nearly all her company were saved. On the following day the *Majestic*, employed on the same service and standing in very close to shore, was also struck and sunk by a single torpedo, probably from the same boat. It was clear that while in the North Sea the submarine attack on ships-of-war could only meet, as Admiral Scheer had found, with "poor success," in the ideal conditions of a coastal bombardment off Gallipoli there was no reliable defence against it. *Queen Elizabeth* and the more valuable battleships were accordingly sent home, and the support of the Dardanelles Expedition was left to monitors, cruisers, and destroyers. It is regrettable that Admiral de Robeck had not at his disposal in 1915 the various anti-submarine devices which proved so successful two years later; but although loud warnings had been uttered before the war as to our dangers from submarine attack, there had been no really imaginative attempt to foresee the probable developments and needs of such a campaign,

and we had to rely, as usual, on our powers of endurance and adaptability.

#### 5. 1915, JULY TO DECEMBER

By the beginning of July, preparations had at last been completed for the unique and difficult operation of destroying the *Königsberg* in the mangrove swamp where she had for six months been hidden. For this purpose the light-draught monitors *Severn* (Captain Fullerton) and *Mersey* (Commander Wilson) had been brought all the way from the Channel, with two small whalers, *Echo* and *Fly*, for mine-sweeping and the *Childers* to take soundings. Admiral King-Hall flew his flag in the little steamer *Tweedmouth*, and his force was completed by the light cruisers *Weymouth* and *Pyramus*. In attendance on the ships were two aeroplanes; their service of bombing and spotting was invaluable, but it was performed under great difficulties, as their only aerodrome was on the island of Mafia, thirty miles distant from their objective. The operations began at dawn on July 6 with a preliminary bombardment by *Weymouth* and the aeroplanes, during which the two monitors moved up the river and anchored under a hot fire from the German pom-poms and three-pounders. They opened on their distant and invisible target, making four hits, but without decisive effect, and early in the afternoon, when both aeroplanes, after flights of nearly a thousand miles in all, had broken down one after the other, they were withdrawn for the day with a loss of four men killed and four wounded. They had, however, discovered and riddled an enemy observation post in a tree, to



which had been due, no doubt, the accuracy of the *Königsberg's* fire.

The attack was renewed on July 11, when the enemy's fire, though fairly accurate, was no longer able to achieve a hit. At half-past twelve the *Severn* opened fire, and Flight-Commander Cull and Flight-Sub-Lieutenant Arnold in the aeroplane on duty began again the difficult work of spotting. The first five salvos were untraceable, the sixth and seventh landed within a hundred yards, the eighth found the *Königsberg*. By this time, however, the aeroplane had been damaged by an anti-aircraft gun, and Commander Cull was obliged to come down to 1200 feet. He stuck to his work, however, in a storm of shells, and Sub-Lieutenant Arnold continued his spotting with minute accuracy, directing the salvos from bow to midships of the *Königsberg*. No less than nine of them had been signalled as hits when the aeroplane was finally brought down. Commander Cull planed skilfully into the water; both he and Sub-Lieutenant Arnold were saved and their machine blown up.

The *Königsberg's* guns now ceased firing one by one, and something aboard of her blew up with a dense cloud of smoke. The *Severn* continued to fire, and when seven more explosions had been heard, both monitors closed to 7000 yards. From this point Captain Fullerton at the masthead of the *Severn* could see the *Königsberg*: she was burning fore and aft with her foremast at an unnatural angle. The *Mersey* put a final salvo into her, and the sea-fight in the forest was over. The last of Admiral von Spee's cruisers had ceased to exist.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The *Karlsruhe* was wrecked and blown up in the West Indies.

The five weeks that followed were filled with a number of incidents of considerable interest. On July 20 occurred the first engagement in a new and valuable form of service—that of submarine against submarine. C 27 (Lieut.-Commander Dobson) was submerged and in tow by the trawler *Princess Louise* when she was informed by telephone that a U-boat was in sight. The telephone then broke down and C 27 was cast off. U 23 opened fire on the *Princess Louise*, whose crew abandoned her, but when the German proceeded to close, Lieut.-Commander Dobson attacked and sank her with his second torpedo. Four officers and six men were picked up out of a crew of thirty-four.

On July 25 the new “Special Service Ships” or “Q Boats”—tramps or colliers with a concealed armament for the decoying and destruction of submarines—achieved their first success. One of them, the *Prince Charles* (Lieutenant W. P. Mark-Wardlaw), attracted a U-boat near North Rona Island and was duly shelled. Her crew abandoned ship, leaving gunners concealed on board, who, when U 36 closed to 500 yards, unmasked their guns and sank the submarine, capturing fifteen of her crew.

On July 26 a German destroyer was torpedoed : on August 8 E 11 sank the Turkish battleship *Haireddin Barbarossa* in the Sea of Marmora, and on the 12th a British aeroplane destroyed a Turkish transport. In the North Sea German activity was greatly diminished. “There seemed,” says Admiral Scheer, “little prospect of an advance for the High Sea Fleet,” and he adds that an advance of mine-laying steamers to the English bases in the North could only lead to needless sacrifice of the boats. The auxiliary

cruiser *Meteor* attempted in August to lay mines in the Moray Firth, and sank the small boarding steamer *Ramsey*. But as the latter went down at the end of a gallant fight she signalled for help, and the *Meteor* was rounded up and captured during the following day. On the whole, the Admiral confesses, "The different advances made during the summer months did not impress the German Fleet with the idea that any serious effort was contemplated of getting to closer quarters with the enemy and challenging him to action." Attention was directed instead to forcing the Gulf of Riga. The U-boat campaign was also slackening; the Germans had sunk nearly two hundred of our ships, depriving us of about 1 per cent of our tonnage; they had lost a much more serious proportion of their submarine fleet. American hostility was still a danger, but one only partially realised. On August 19, little more than three months after the sinking of the *Lusitania*, U 27 (Commander Neigener) was destroying the steamer *Dunsley* off the Irish coast, and took the opportunity of torpedoing the White Star liner *Arabic* from Liverpool as she came to the rescue of the sinking ship. The *Arabic* sank in eight minutes with a loss of thirty of her complement, including two American passengers; and U 27 went on her way. In the afternoon when sixty miles from Queenstown she sighted fresh victims, as she thought. The nearer one was the *Nicosian*, with a cargo of mules for the British Army; the other was also apparently American and looked like an ordinary tramp. U 27 torpedoed the *Nicosian* and as she did not sink, began to shell her without any regard for the lives of the men aboard her. The *Nicosian's* captain and crew, who were British,



thereupon abandoned ship and took to their boats, but the men in charge of the mules were all Americans, and as neutrals thought themselves safer aboard their own vessel. But presently, when the shelling had ceased, they saw a boat put off from the submarine, and, to their indignation, perceived it to be carrying bombs for the destruction of the *Nicosian*. They determined to take the law into their own hands. When the German boat's crew boarded the *Nicosian* they were instantly attacked and killed with furnace bars.

In the meantime the other ship approached, and, dropping a port in her side, appeared as no tramp but the British Special Service ship *Baralong* with guns trained on the enemy. Her fire immediately broke the back of U 27, so that she could not possibly submerge. Thereupon Commander Neigener with the remainder of his crew put off in a second boat towards the *Nicosian*, where they evidently thought to join their friends and fight or surrender according to circumstances. For the *Baralong's* captain they were still combatant enemies, and he had no knowledge of what weapons they might be able to use against him if once aboard the *Nicosian*. He therefore fired upon them as they boarded her. Some were killed in this manner and the remainder by the muleteers as before.

The *Nicosian's* captain and crew then returned and eventually got their ship into Avonmouth docks. There the whole story was told openly and repeatedly by the eyewitnesses. The British naval authorities, anxious for a tradition of generous chivalry which they valued above any precaution or retribution, dismissed the second officer of the *Nicosian* for the



share he had taken in the proceedings of the Americans, who had certainly failed to make three or four prisoners. The man was aggrieved, and complained of unjust treatment to the British remount officer to whom he handed over the mules, threatening to make mischief when he returned to America. In due course, a German-American paper produced a statement signed by four men, of whom one was the aggrieved second officer, while another had not been present at the encounter. The statement was to the effect that the U-boat's men were drowned or shot in the water by the British as they endeavoured to surrender. The signatories had made no such accusation at Avonmouth, and it was in fact a malicious perversion of the truth.

The German Government afterwards demanded that the officers of the *Baralong* should be tried for murder. Sir Edward Grey offered in reply an investigation by a court of American naval officers, empowered to inquire at the same time into the sinking of the *Arabic*, the attack (also made on August 19) on E 13 on the neutral island of Saltholm, and the firing on the boats of the steamer *Ruel*. This condition the German Government refused to accept, and threatened retaliatory measures upon the British Navy for refusing mercy to "an enemy who has been put out of action." Sir Edward Grey replied by reminding the German Government of their own "barbarous and illegal methods," and declared truly that to destroy an enemy who surrenders has never been the practice of the British Navy. The Germans, however, continued to make a grievance against us out of an incident upon which they dared not address the American Government; and though many of

their own submarine service have since then surrendered to our ships, even their admirals stimulate German feeling to this day by writing of a "*Baralong* fate" as a danger faced by every U-boat crew.

On this same day, August 19, a German destroyer flotilla returning from a night reconnaissance north of Horn's Reef "notified a success" in what may fairly be called a moonshine attack. "The visibility conditions on our side," says Admiral Scheer, "were so excellent that apparently unobserved our craft approached the enemy within 3000 metres." The enemy were, in fact, trawlers engaged in fishing, but the German flotilla having cautiously torpedoed two of them at long range went home and reported that they had sunk a light cruiser and one destroyer out of a division of eight. Finally, it was also on this day, August 19, that E 1 torpedoed the battle-cruiser *Moltke* in the Gulf of Riga. Unfortunately, though the *Moltke* took in 450 tons of water, she eventually got into dock and was repaired.

On August 21 the British Expeditionary Force in Gallipoli made its final effort. The operations, which had begun on August 6, were covered by the fire of monitors, but the Navy took no distinctive part in them. On the 23rd the Allied Fleets were once more active on the Belgian coast, bombarding Zeebrugge, the port of Bruges, which since March had been a German submarine base. On the 26th off Ostend, another submarine base, a U-boat was bombed and destroyed by a British airman, Squadron-Commander Bigsworth.

In the North Sea the month of September for the British Navy was comparatively uneventful. For the German it was marked by extreme tension. Owing

to a difference of opinion between the heads of the Navy and the Government concerning the conduct of the U-boat warfare, a change in the post of Chief of the Naval Staff was effected early in the month. Admiral Bachmann was replaced by Admiral von Holtzendorff, who was not on friendly terms with the State Secretary, Grand-Admiral von Tirpitz. This change therefore confirmed the policy of inactivity with the High Sea Fleet, but naturally rather increased than diminished the existing friction. At the same time the Fleet itself was kept in a perpetual state of tension by reports that the English Navy was taking part in the Anglo-French offensive then opening on the western front. This was aggravated by the fact that the battleships of one squadron were forced to remain for a long time in dock to be fitted with range-finders, and that most of the ships had to renew the bearing of their screw shafts, which had suffered from the Fleet lying so constantly in the sandy waters of the Jade Basin.

The one disaster of the month for us occurred in the Aegean, where the *Royal Edward*, a large ship carrying reinforcements for the Twenty-ninth Division in Gallipoli, was torpedoed and sunk with a loss of 1000 officers and men out of 1600 on board. Such a disaster would, at the beginning of the war, have been received with dismay as well as grief, but the nation was now inured to pain and accepted the blow calmly. It was indeed remarkable that though the Admiralty had 400,000 tons of shipping under charter, and had conveyed between one and two million men oversea, this was the first time that a life had been lost in a transport, after more than a year of war.

On land the situation of the Allies was now very



grave. The Russian Army had been defeated, and the Grand Duke Nicholas dismissed to the Caucasus. The final attack on Serbia had begun. Bulgaria's attitude was threatening and Greece was asking for support. Sir John French's offensive on the western front had failed. By October 1 the British Government announced that the position in the Balkans was one of the utmost gravity; and on the 3rd, in spite of a formal protest from Greece, the French policy was adopted and Allied troops were landed at Salonica. The new campaign thus opened was too late to save Serbia, but it was a blow possible only to the power controlling the sea, and it was destined, in the end, to have a remarkable result. Bulgaria, however, declared war on Serbia two days afterwards; the King of Greece refused the help which he was bound by treaty to give; Great Britain declared war on Bulgaria on the 15th, and on the 21st the British Fleet bombarded the depots on the Bulgarian coast. It soon became evident that the new expedition could only be pursued as a substitute for the Gallipoli campaign. Sir Ian Hamilton protested with deep feeling against the abandonment of an enterprise so important and so near success, but the Navy could not be expected to keep up the communications of two great armies in the east, and the evacuation of Gallipoli was secretly ordered. With extraordinary skill the heavy guns and other material were removed by General Birdwood from the Anzac and Suvla positions between December 8 and 18, and gradually shipped by the Fleet. On the night of the 18th, at 6 P.M., the battleships and monitors prepared for action, and the transports took off the bulk of the troops and their stores. On the night of the 19th the rearguard



troops and the last of the guns were taken off after a bombardment by the Fleet. The French troops were then embarked on January 1, and a week later the positions at Helles were evacuated in the same way and with the same success, while the Turks bombarded our bonfires all night. The evacuation was a confession of failure, but as a combined operation by an army and navy it remains a perfect and almost miraculous example. The year, however, closed in gloom. Besides the disasters already mentioned, we had lost in October the transports *Ramazan* and *Marquette*, sunk in the Aegean with heavy loss, and on the 28th the cruiser *Argyll* ran aground on the Scotch coast. On December 30 the *Persia* had been torpedoed in the Mediterranean, and on the same day the armoured cruiser *Natal* (Captain Eric Back) had blown up in Cromarty harbour. The brightest records of the half-year were those of our submarines, who rendered unparalleled service both in the Baltic and the Dardanelles.

## 6. 1916

Depressing though the incidents of the last few months had been, they had left both our army and navy with strength unimpaired, and the nation with resolution unshaken. Neither Sir Douglas Haig nor Admiral Jellicoe was troubled with any serious doubts on policy, and both were looking forward to striking an effective blow during the year. The German case was very different. The Commander-in-Chief of their Fleet, Admiral von Pohl, was failing fast. Early in January he handed over the active command to his deputy, Admiral Scheer, and on

February 23 he died. We know from Grand-Admiral von Tirpitz, and it is clear from all the facts, that the basis of his policy had been the avoidance of a fleet action; but according to his successor, "his highest ambition was to live to see it." This inconsistency is not unnatural. Admiral Scheer himself was in much the same position; a fight under favourable conditions was his ambition too, but his preparations for increased fleet activity consisted, like his predecessor's, of raids and traps accompanied with a full sense of "the responsibility of sending the (older) ships into an unequal fight where the enemy would make use of his very best material." His single exploit during the first five months of the year was the bombardment of Lowestoft and Yarmouth on April 25, when the High Sea Fleet was chased home to its base in the old way by our battle-cruisers and Fifth Battle Squadron. The real naval policy of the year was far from being a battle policy. It relied on an unrestricted U-boat campaign, and the whole of the twelve months was filled with a hot discussion between the naval chiefs, who were all for extremes in this direction, and the generals at headquarters, who felt the military position to be too dangerous to admit of any fresh risks. Grand-Admiral von Tirpitz was dismissed on March 18 from his position as Naval Secretary of State, but the debate continued and a full account of it will be found in a separate chapter. During its course the U-boats were intermittently active, and we suffered losses both by mines and torpedoes. *Arethusa* was mined in February, *Coquette Fauvette*, and a destroyer in March, the old battleship *Russell* in April; in June the cruiser *Hampshire*, in which perished Lord Kitchener and all his staff; in

August the destroyer *Lassoo* and the boarding steamer *Duke of Albany*; in October the destroyers *Flirt* and *Nubian*, and in November the liner *Britannic*. The chief losses by torpedo were the *Primula* and the liner *Minneapolis* in March, the *Cymric* in May, the *Arabia* in October. On August 19, during a sweep to the south by the Grand Fleet, which drove the High Sea Fleet back to port without a shot, the light cruiser *Nottingham*, one of the advanced screen, was hit by two torpedoes and sunk an hour afterwards by a third. At 5 on the same morning E 23 torpedoed a battleship of the *Nassau* type in the German First Battle Squadron, and hit her again at 7.20 while on her way home under a strong escort, but she succeeded in reaching port. At 4.52 in the afternoon the light cruiser *Falmouth* was hit by two torpedoes. Her enemy was then destroyed by depth-charges, and she proceeded homewards, but was hit again twice off Flamborough Head by another U-boat, which in its turn was rammed by the destroyer *Porpoise*. On our side of the account it must be mentioned also that the battle-cruiser *Seydlitz* was disabled by a mine in April, and that on November 7 two dreadnoughts of the *Kaiser* class were torpedoed by J 1 (Commander Lawrence), but succeeded in reaching port.

The experiment was also tried during this year of using submarines to run the blockade of the Atlantic. The *Deutschland*, a large and specially designed boat, unarmed, but laden with valuable dyes, sailed for America in June, and was at Norfolk, Virginia, by July 9. She succeeded in returning home by August 24, but when she ventured on a second voyage at the beginning of November, she was almost immediately destroyed by a British patrol.



In another direction increased German activity was certainly shown, but it was not of Admiral Scheer's planning. On March 3 "a wireless message from the auxiliary cruiser *Moewe* was a surprising and joyful piece of news." She reported being stationed south-west of the Norwegian coast, and asked to be enrolled in the High Sea forces. The *Moewe* was an armed auxiliary cruiser commanded by Count Zu Dohna: disguised as a tramp under the Swedish flag, she had in two months captured fifteen vessels of the value of £2,000,000, and now brought home with her four British officers and twenty-nine men, with one hundred and sixty-six civilians and £50,000 in gold. Another raider, the *Greif*, was not so successful. On February 29, the *Alcantara*, a British auxiliary cruiser, meeting her off the Shetlands, challenged her in spite of the Norwegian colours painted on her sides. The *Greif* torpedoed and sank the *Alcantara* after a short fight, but was herself set on fire. The destroyer *Comus* and another auxiliary cruiser, the *Andes*, then came up and sank the *Greif*, after taking off the 209 survivors of her crew.

It is, however, the work of the Grand Fleet in which is centred the interest of the year 1916, and to which historians will, more and more certainly, look back as having achieved one of the three great decisions of the naval war. The battle of the Falklands cleared the outer seas; the crisis of the anti-submarine war has yet to be described; the battle of Jutland ended all that was effective or honourable in the history of the High Sea Fleet.

On May 30, 1916, the Grand Fleet put to sea for the purpose of carrying out one of its periodical



sweeps in the North Sea. It consisted of twenty-four dreadnought battleships, moving at first in six divisions in line ahead, disposed abeam to starboard. The flagships of the six divisions were as follows: first division, *King George V.* (Admiral Jerram); second, *Orion* (Rear-Admiral Leveson); third, *Iron Duke* (Admiral Jellicoe, Commander-in-Chief) and *Superb* (Rear-Admiral Duff); fourth, *Benbow* (Admiral Sturdee); fifth, *Colossus* (Rear-Admiral E. F. A. Gaunt); sixth, *Marlborough* (Admiral Burney, Second in Command of the Fleet). In advance of them, and necessarily at a considerable distance to avoid alarming the enemy too soon, was the Battle-Cruiser Fleet, consisting of *Lion* (flagship of Admiral Beatty), *Princess Royal* (Rear-Admiral Brock), *Tiger*, *Queen Mary*, *Indefatigable*, and *New Zealand* (Rear-Admiral Pakenham), with the Fifth Battle Squadron, *Barham* (flagship of Rear-Admiral Evan-Thomas), *Valiant*, *Malaya*, and *Warspite*. In front of these, again, were the First, Second, and Third Light-Cruiser Squadrons under Commodore Goodenough in *Southampton*, and the 1st, 9th, 10th, and 13th Destroyer Flotillas. With the Battle Fleet were also the Third Battle-Cruiser Squadron under Rear-Admiral Hood, the First Cruiser Squadron under Rear-Admiral Arbuthnot, the Second Cruiser Squadron under Rear-Admiral Heath, the Fourth Light-Cruiser Squadron, and the 4th, 11th, and 12th Destroyer Flotillas. On the following morning the High Sea Fleet, in ignorance of this move, also put to sea, the five battle-cruisers in advance under Admiral Hipper with cruisers and destroyers, and at some distance behind them the Battle Fleet under Admiral Scheer, consisting of fifteen dreadnoughts and six

older and weaker ships, with three divisions of cruisers, seven torpedo flotillas, and ten Zeppelins, most of which, however, took no part in what followed. The German Admiral's object is described as "a northern enterprise," and he speaks of his "hope of meeting with separate enemy divisions."

At 2.20 P.M. on the 31st the First Light-Cruiser Squadron sighted two enemy vessels, and at 2.35 *Galatea* (Commodore Alexander - Sinclair) reported smoke "as from a fleet" steering north. At 3.31 Admiral Beatty sighted Hipper's five battle-cruisers and formed his line of battle. At the same moment Admiral Jellicoe, who had also taken in the signals, informed his fleet of the situation and ordered full speed.

At 3.48 the battle-cruiser action began at 18,500 yards, Hipper turning to rejoin his fleet and Beatty racing south to cut him off. The firing on both sides was rapid and accurate, the Germans making especially good practice. By four o'clock the leading ships in each fleet had all been hit and *Lion* had had the roof of one of her turrets blown off. At 4.6 a salvo struck *Indefatigable* at the outer edge of the deck and a magazine exploded. A second salvo struck her immediately and she sank.

Two minutes afterwards the slower Fifth Battle Squadron struggled into action at a range of nearly 20,000 yards. At 4.15 twelve destroyers on our side, and on the enemy's fifteen destroyers and a light cruiser, attacked simultaneously and fought fiercely at close quarters. Two of these ships were sunk on each side, but *Nestor* and *Nomad*, before they went down, compelled the German battle-cruisers to turn away.

The battle-cruiser action was now resumed. The German fire was deteriorating, and at 4.18 the third enemy ship was on fire, but at 4.26 a salvo hit the *Queen Mary* abreast of a turret and an explosion resulted, so violent that in one minute the ship was gone, and the *Tiger*, passing over the spot, saw nothing of her but smoke and the debris which fell upon the decks from an immense height. But the loss of two powerful ships made no difference to the resolution or the tactics of Admiral Beatty.

At 4.38 Commodore Goodenough, scouting ahead in *Southampton*, reported the enemy's Battle Fleet steering north. Admiral Beatty sighted them four minutes later, recalled his destroyers, and turned his battle-cruisers sixteen points, so as to head north instead of south. Admiral Hipper held on south, fighting on opposite courses for twelve minutes, and then turned north himself. During this phase of the action the two leading ships of the Fifth Battle Squadron were supporting the battle-cruisers, while the two rear ships, *Warspite* and *Malaya*, engaged the leading ships of the High Sea Fleet, though the thickening weather made the firing intermittent. For half an hour, indeed, Admiral Beatty was compelled to cease fire, but resumed again with effect from 5.42 to 5.52.

The Grand Fleet was now approaching. In advance of it Admiral Hood's Third Battle-Cruiser Squadron was driving off Hipper's light cruisers and destroyers, in conjunction with four of our own destroyers who attacked with great gallantry.

At 5.47 Rear-Admiral Sir Robert Arbuthnot in *Defence*, with *Warrior* astern, came to the front, sighted the light cruiser *Wiesbaden*, and opened fire upon her, passing right across the bows of the *Lion*



in his eagerness to close. By 6.10 the two ships were being fired upon by the enemy's battle-cruisers, but continued to close their opponent, who was now crippled. At 6.16 *Defence* was hit by two salvos in quick succession and blew up at once. *Warrior* was also badly hit by two of the battle-cruisers, who appear to have turned sixteen points for the purpose of rescuing the *Wiesbaden*.

In this moment of low visibility and confused movement, in the interval between the first and second parts of the action, another misfortune occurred. Rear-Admiral Hood, who had just sighted the First Battle-Cruiser Squadron, at 6.16 signalled to his own Third Squadron battle-cruisers to take station ahead of *Lion*. The movement was magnificently executed, and in the fierce fighting which followed, *Invincible* was seen to be hitting with every salvo. But at 6.34 a big shell burst inside one of her turrets, her magazine blew up, and the ship broke in half and sank at once. *Inflexible* was left as leader of the line, which shortly afterwards turned twice to starboard to close the disappearing enemy; but at 6.50 Admiral Beatty ordered *Inflexible* and *Indomitable* to take station astern of *New Zealand*.

A significant incident then occurred—the High Sea Fleet, seeing these ships dash in to prolong the rear line of the battle-cruisers, mistook them for the van of our Battle Fleet, and immediately turned away to starboard. The Battle Fleet was, at the moment, after deploying on a south-easterly course, hauling round to south, and did not steer west till more than an hour afterwards. It was, however, already in action. Sir John Jellicoe had received at 6.5 P.M. from Admiral Burney a report of “gun-flashes



and heavy gun-fire on the starboard bow," and about the same time the *Lion*, with other battle-cruisers, was sighted from the *Iron Duke* steering east in a thick mist. It was becoming clear that the enemy's fleet was a little on the starboard bow, and a report from Admiral Beatty at 6.14 P.M. showed that it was in close proximity. There was no time to lose; the Fleet must be deployed at once. At 6.16 Admiral Jellicoe ordered the line of battle to be formed on the port wing column on a course south-east by east—approximately the same as that of the battle-cruisers. We have now, therefore, to imagine the six divisions of the Grand Fleet, which had approached in six parallel columns, deploying into a single line ahead eastwards, each division successively taking station astern of the division to port. We may further note that, as the whole movement takes twenty minutes to perform, and time has also to be given for the battle-cruisers to get clear ahead, the speed of the Fleet is reduced to fourteen knots, and even so there is, for a time, a certain amount of "bunching" among the rear or starboard divisions. Finally Admiral Evan-Thomas, who would have headed the line if it had been formed to starboard, had now to make a large turn in order to form astern. The turn was very well executed under fire from the enemy's leading battleships; but their shooting was no longer good enough to be dangerous. The *Warspite* alone suffered, and that from a singular accident. Her helm jammed and she continued to turn involuntarily until she was actually closing the enemy, firing all her guns and surrounded by shell splashes. She was well extricated by Captain Phillpotts, and steered north to make good her damages.

At this time the sixth or *Marlborough's* division was immediately to the north of the enemy's Battle Fleet, and was firing on their van at 13,000 yards. The fifth division also opened fire at 6.30. The leading divisions were not engaged, except in firing at an enemy ship which passed along the line, partly disabled, until she sank towards the rear, but at 6.30 our battle-cruisers having drawn clear, the third and fourth divisions opened fire on the German *König* battleships, punishing them heavily, and receiving no hits in return. The two van divisions began firing shortly afterwards at both battleships and battle-cruisers, but in much worse conditions of visibility. By 6.38 the deployment was complete, and speed had been increased to seventeen knots.

Battle was now joined, and whatever its details, the issue could no longer be a matter of doubt to either side. German officers have recorded in the plainest words their recognition that from this moment the fight was a hopeless one. "The way we were utterly crushed from the moment your Battle Fleet came into action took the heart out of the men." The certainty in the English Fleet of a crushing victory was only troubled by the low and fitful visibility, and the recollection that daylight would very shortly be failing. On the other hand, a good many ships had the satisfaction of seeing their enemy hard hit and burning, while they themselves were untouched. The German gunnery had evidently completely failed. Setting aside the not very serious injuries received by the *Warspite* in her involuntary escapade, during the whole action only a single hit was achieved by the German gunners upon the remaining twenty-seven ships of the Battle Fleet,

and that one hit wounded only three men in the *Colossus*.

The enemy's torpedoes had no better success; their tracks were seen and they were skilfully avoided. Their only hit was upon the *Marlborough* at 6.54, and it did not disable her. She avoided three more torpedoes afterwards, reopened fire at 7.3, and at 7.12 hit a *König* battleship so frequently that she forced her to turn out of the line.

By this time the course of the Grand Fleet had been altered more than once so as to close the enemy, and in order to do this more rapidly, the alterations were made independently "by divisions" instead of in succession. From 7 to 7.30 the course of the enemy was turning through eight points from south-east to south-west, opening the range from 8500 yards in the rear to 15,000 in the van, but both his battleships and battle-cruisers were suffering heavily, and at 7.15 a flotilla of his destroyers ran forward to 6500 yards, fired torpedoes, and returned to the rear behind a heavy smoke screen. Twenty of the torpedoes crossed our line, but were avoided by the ships turning away two, four, or six points. A second destroyer attack a quarter of an hour later was defeated by gun-fire of battleships, light cruisers, and destroyers. But it was during these two attacks that Admiral Scheer made his principal turn to starboard, and rapidly drew out of sight towards the west. The British Fleet lost time at this point, not only by turning away to avoid torpedoes, but also by assuming that the disappearance of the High Sea Fleet was due only to the thickening mist and not to its endeavour to break off the action. Touch was now lost between the Battle Fleets, though in Admiral Beatty's ardent



pursuit to the south-west the battle-cruisers sighted each other again, and could be heard firing up to half-past eight, when the enemy ships then visible turned away eight points and disappeared. The light by this time was failing completely, and even Admiral Beatty had to give up hope of sinking the battle-cruisers he had so desperately mauled.

Admiral Jellicoe had now to consider his dispositions for the night. He had succeeded completely in driving the enemy off to the west, and interposing between him and his base. He strongly preferred (and Admiral Beatty agreed in preferring) the prospect of a final battle next day to the confusion and the chances of a night action, for which he believed the Germans to be specially prepared with star-shells, search-lights, secondary armament firing-gear, and an extra supply of torpedoes. His object, therefore, was so to place his forces as to ensure the maximum of danger to the enemy if he endeavoured to escape home in the hours of darkness. He therefore took the Battle Fleet on a southerly course, formed with its four squadrons in four parallel columns one mile apart, so that they could neither lose touch nor mistake each other for the enemy. The destroyer flotillas he placed five miles astern, and at 9.32 he sent the mine-laying flotilla leader *Abdiel* (Captain Berwick Curtis) to lay a mine-field in the area through which the enemy must pass if he attempted to escape *via* the Horn Reef. The result of this operation was indicated by several under-water explosions heard during the night by one of our submarines stationed near the Horn Reef. The battle-cruisers and cruisers lay to the west of the Battle Fleet, the Second and Fourth Light-Cruiser Squadrons north and south of it.



The night action began with an attack on our destroyers by three or more light cruisers. The enemy, by rapid fire, slightly damaged the *Castor* (Commodore Hawksley), but disappeared after one of them had been hit by a torpedo. At 10.20 a German cruiser and four light cruisers attacked our Second Light-Cruiser Squadron at very short range. They inflicted heavy casualties on *Southampton* and *Dublin*, but immediately disappeared with the loss of the light cruiser *Frauenlob*. At 11.30 the 4th Flotilla lost the destroyer *Sparrowhawk* in an action with enemy cruisers, one of which was torpedoed and went away apparently sinking. Some ships of this flotilla then came into contact at midnight with the older German battleships, one of which—the *Pommern*—was torpedoed and sank. Another squadron of battleships passed a little later, and sank the destroyer *Ardent*.

The 12th Flotilla, which was some miles farther north, at 1.45 A.M. sighted six *Kaisers* steering south-east. Captain Stirling in the *Faulkoner* led an attack at 3000 yards: the third battleship was torpedoed with so violent an explosion and such a mass of flame that the magazine appeared to have detonated. Commander Champion in the *Maenad*, of the same flotilla, torpedoed another of the same squadron at 2.25 A.M. Neither of the two ships struck was seen again, but it is stated by the Germans that both reached port.

At 12.30 a large vessel crossed the 9th Flotilla, fired into the *Petard*, and rammed and sank the *Turbulent*. At 2.35 the destroyer *Moresby* of the 13th Flotilla attacked four *Deutschland* battleships and torpedoed one. Finally, there is little doubt that

during the night action the cruiser *Black Prince* came to her end. She had been heavily hit in Admiral Arbuthnot's attack at 6.16, and had lost touch with the Fleet. At 11 P.M. the light cruiser *Active* observed a ship coming up from the north, and shortly afterwards saw her sink under the search-lights and gunfire of several ships on her starboard quarter.

At 2 A.M. on June 1, Admiral Burney, finding that *Marlborough* could no longer maintain the Fleet's speed of seventeen knots, transferred his flag to *Revenge*. *Marlborough* then went home under her own steam, evading a submarine attack on the way. The Fleet had now steamed eighty-five miles during the night. At 2.47 A.M., as dawn was breaking, Admiral Jellicoe altered course from south to north and formed the Fleet in single line ahead, the Second Battle Squadron leading as on the day before, until the Fifth Battle Squadron rejoined at 3.30 A.M. and took station at the head of the line. At 6 A.M. the cruisers were sighted, and at nine the destroyers rejoined; Admiral Burney with the sixth division did not come up until evening, having dropped astern owing to *Marlborough's* reduced speed and the process of changing flag. The Battle-Cruiser Fleet, on the other hand, joined the Battle Fleet in accordance with signal at 5.15 A.M., and the Grand Fleet then patrolled the battle area till noon, moving first north till nearly nine o'clock, then south-west till 10, then north by west.

By 12.30 P.M. it had become clear that all disabled enemy vessels had either sunk or limped away inside the mine-fields. It was also evident that Admiral Scheer had no intention of giving an opportunity for a second engagement. A Zeppelin had been sighted to the west of the Battle Fleet at 3.30 A.M. She

was fired upon and driven off at 3.50, but was sighted subsequently at intervals, and Admiral Scheer states that she reported to him the position of the British squadrons. But he was in no condition to move. He had inflicted on us a loss of three battle-cruisers, three armoured cruisers, and eight destroyers, while of his own fleet, the battleship *Pommern*, the battle-cruiser *Lützow*, four light cruisers—*Wiesbaden*, *Elbing*, *Rostock*, and *Frauenlob*—and five destroyers had been sunk. But whereas Admiral Jellicoe had twenty-two dreadnoughts untouched, and an abundant force of cruisers, Admiral Scheer could no longer be said to command a fleet in being. He himself explains his return to port by the fact that he had only three fast light cruisers left available, that of the battle-cruisers one division would not be capable of sustaining a serious fight, and that another could not have fought for any length of time from lack of ammunition: further, that the dreadnought *Ostfriesland* had struck one of our mines, and the *Seydlitz* was so badly damaged that she only just succeeded in reaching Wilhelmshaven. The *Derfflinger* was also a wreck, and, like the *Seydlitz*, would take a long time to repair. Of the remainder, as we know, three at least had been torpedoed, and others badly hit. A month after the battle there were ten great ships in dock for heavy repairs, and Admiral Scheer could only promise the Kaiser that the High Sea Fleet, with three battle-cruisers, would be ready for sea by the middle of August, whereas the Grand Fleet was at its base, fuelled and ready for sea, at 9.45 P.M. on June 2. No account of the really material facts was taken in the spiritless announcement issued from the Admiralty immediately after the battle. Its aim



was scrupulous honesty, its effect was, for a time, to mislead the whole world. The Germans, true to their belief in the superiority of opinion to fact, hastened to claim a victory ; but they were refuted by realities—the battered ships behind their closely guarded dock-gates on one side, on the other the unbroken continuity of all British operations at sea. It was plainer every day that our loss of strength had been relatively small, the German fatally large. The moral result was more decisive still. It was, in fact, absolutely final. The control of the sea was now unassailably ours. The High Sea Fleet, even when patched, could never again be ordered to meet the Grand Fleet until it met it to surrender without a blow.

#### 7. 1917

With the year 1917 began a new phase of the naval war. The change was due not to any new policy on our part, nor to the ruthless substitution of one Prime Minister for another, nor, again, to the re-arrangements in the naval service by which Sir John Jellicoe had become First Sea Lord on December 4, leaving the place of Commander-in-Chief to Admiral Beatty. The true cause lay deeper. The Germans, as Ludendorff perceived, had begun the war at their maximum strength, whereas the Allies possessed great powers of expansion if only the necessary time could be gained. The time had been gained ; the German programme had been interrupted at Liège, at the Marne, and at Ypres ; then, after a period of deadlock, Verdun, Jutland, and the Somme had broken their strength and brought them to the end of their recuperative power. The Kaiser's peace



move in December 1916 was rather a trap than a genuine offer ; its intention was to provide a semblance of justification for the use of the last weapon—unrestricted U-boat war—but the desperate nature of the position was known to many besides the Higher Command, and there were officers who burst into tears when they heard of the Allies' firm reply. The story of the whole manœuvre will be found more fully on a later page. The decision was made by Hindenburg on January 8, 1917, and communicated to the Kaiser on the 9th. The U-boat campaign was proclaimed on January 31, and on February 3 the natural and long-dreaded consequence ensued. The American President severed diplomatic relations with Germany, and on April 4 and 6 war resolutions were passed in both Houses of Congress. The central point of interest in the naval history of the year is therefore the effort made by the British and American Navies to defeat the attempt of the U-boats to hinder or destroy their control of the sea, whether for purposes of transport or commerce.

The work was undertaken and carried through with anxious resolution, with concentration and great resourcefulness at the Admiralty, and among the officers and men on active service with a combination of carefulness and courage, professional seriousness and cheerful love of sport, characteristic of the nation. Every available quality was needed for the campaign, which was wide, incessant, and critical. The Germans had made great preparations. In the preceding six months they had built no less than eighty new submarines of improved patterns. The majority of the large U-boats were allotted for use in the area west of England. The smaller U.B.-boats and the

U.C.-boats, or mine-layers, having a lesser radius of action, operated mainly from Ostend and Zeebrugge. The distribution on February 1, 1917, was as follows : in the North Sea, 57 ; in the Baltic, 8 ; in Flanders, 38 ; in the Mediterranean, 31—134 in all. There were also a few U-cruisers of 1200 tons, and afterwards one of 2000. These had been built for commercial purposes, but after the destruction of the *Deutschland* were fitted as warships with heavy guns.

If this fleet could have kept the sea, it would have been not only a formidable but a grave danger. Admiral Scheer tells us, however, that after each patrol of three or four weeks, every boat must be docked for the same length of time. We know also that constant breakdowns caused a great diminution of the total efficiency, and that losses at sea rapidly became a serious embarrassment. At the height of the campaign, in the second half of the year, the average number of U-boats operating at the same time round the British Isles was between thirty and thirty-five, or one-fourth of the total number. The effect of the campaign was very considerable, especially at first. Admiral Scheer's figures refer to the tonnage of the whole world, and are exaggerated, but the inaccuracy is probably a fairly constant error, and would not affect the rise and fall of a curve. The sinkings claimed by him begin with 780,000 tons in February 1917, and 885,000 in March, reach a maximum of over a million tons in both April and June, and decline again to 600,000 in November and 700,000 in December, after which they continue to fall rapidly until the close of the war. The easiest successes were naturally in the Mediterranean, where the U-boats enjoyed the advantages of an unlimited coast-line, &

clearer sea, freedom from the danger of mine-fields, and a comparative immunity from destroyers and patrol boats.

The counter-measures adopted by the British Admiralty were of many kinds. They had been gradually developed. In 1915 the excellent work of the destroyers had been brilliantly seconded by a limited number of armed trawlers, smacks, and drifters, mounted with small concealed guns, six-pounders or even three-pounders. In 1916 the decoy method had been considerably extended, and had added a number of successes to that of the *Prince Charles* already related. In 1917 a still further development took place, which is laid to the credit of one of the most brilliant of the younger officers in this war. Commander Gordon Campbell, who had already commanded the Q-boat *Farnborough* during the year before, and had succeeded in surprising and destroying two U-boats in three weeks, noted with regret that the decoy method as then practised was losing its effect. U-boats which had escaped from encounters with disguised tramps gave the alarm on their return home, and the German press was instructed to complain, while at the same time the whole submarine service was ordered to be less rash in approaching apparently unarmed ships. Commander Campbell's method in these circumstances was to play a confidence trick upon the enemy, and, in order to get their chance, he and his crew actually manœuvred to be torpedoed. The crew then abandoned ship, as Lieutenant Mark-Wardlaw's men had done after being fired upon, while Commander Campbell with his guns' crews remained concealed on board and sank the U-boat when she summoned



up courage to approach. He practised this astonishing method no less than three times during 1917, and was successful twice; becoming a legend in the British service and a terror to the German.

The "Q" boats, however, were a weapon which became less and less useful as their practice was disclosed, and during the summer of 1917 their record was passed by the British Submarine Service, which sank its eleventh U-boat at the beginning of September. By this time the sea was becoming a hunting-ground in which the beasts of prey had themselves become beasts of the chase. Guns had been mounted in 3000 of our auxiliary vessels, from liners and colliers down to the smallest trawlers and drifters. A large patrol fleet was now in commission, consisting of sloops, gunboats, motor-launches, motor-boats, yachts, and "P" boats of a fast new type. Most of these carried guns, and all of them depth-charges. The depth-charge, a bomb which could be set to explode automatically at any desired depth, had by this time been improved and enlarged; the 230 lb. form of it was extremely efficient, and would fatally injure a submarine not only by a direct hit but at a distance of some thirty yards. During the whole war, more U-boats were destroyed in fight by this weapon than by any other, and it remains a danger which alone would make a future submarine offensive a much more hazardous enterprise than the last. By the end of the war, seaplanes and airships were also being employed in this kind of service. They were able to sight a submarine from a great distance, and approach it with great speed and accuracy; they could detect it even when submerged at a considerable depth. In 1917 the convoys which made the double



passage, known as the "Beef Trip" to Holland and back every twenty-four hours, were escorted not only by destroyers but by two seaplanes scouting in advance. U-boats were sighted from time to time, but the convoy was never once touched by them, and Major B. D. Hobbs, in Seaplane 8676, twice succeeded in destroying one of them—U.C. 6 in September 1917, and U.B. 20 in July 1918. Lastly, a new invention—the paravane or automatic explosive sweep—came into use during this year and detonated against two U-boats as well as a number of mines.

Besides these more active methods, the laying of nets and mines was carried on incessantly and with ever-increasing ingenuity. The net was not in itself, as was commonly believed, a serious danger, but it was effectively combined with the use of mines laid in ladders at spots where U-boats would attempt to pass under or through the barrage. The mine-laying service, after Jutland, was developed into a special force—the 20th Flotilla, of which the *Abdiel* (Commander Berwick Curtis) became the flagship. So early as September 1914 Admiral von Ingenohl, then Commander-in-Chief of the High Sea Fleet, was complaining that he could not run the risk of manœuvring in the Bight of Heligoland because of the British submarines and their mines. The destroyer mine-layers must have added greatly to these risks, and among Admiral Scheer's numerous omissions is probably the neglect to mention the list of ships which incurred the same fate as the *Ostfriesland*.

Lastly, three methods of avoidance were devised by the Admiralty for decreasing the dangers of the campaign to merchant vessels. One of these was the old system of convoy, which in spite of one or two

misfortunes, achieved an astonishing degree of success, and completely falsified the confident German hopes of barring the Atlantic to the transports of the American Army. The second was a point of detail—a general order to captains to take or avoid certain routes and to zig-zag continually in their course. The third was the more striking and novel device known as dazzle-painting, carried to great perfection by Commander Norman Wilkinson. War vessels had hitherto been painted for invisibility, merchant vessels and liners for effect. The object of the new method was to falsify the whole aspect of the ship and deceive an enemy as to her type, her construction, the relative position of her masts and funnels, and even the direction of her course. By the end of 1917 Commander Wilkinson had designed over four hundred models of striped and shaded disguise, and these designs were sent out to be copied by captains in all parts of the world. Neither this device nor obedience to the other instructions of the Admiralty could, of course, obviate all danger, but it could unquestionably disturb the U-boat torpedo officer's aim. Unfortunately it is not in the character of the British skipper to take much account of danger on his own element, and we suffered many losses which a use of these precautions might easily have avoided.

The ships once sunk, it was sometimes possible to raise them, and another special service was organised for salvage under Rear-Admiral Phillpotts and Commodore F. W. Young. In 1916, 190,000 tons of shipping were raised. In 1917, when the system had reached full efficiency, 518,000 tons were salvaged, and in the following year the figure rose to 884,000. The total salvage of the three years amounted to

over a million and a half tons, and represented a value of £50,000,000 in ships, bullion, and stores.

During the year the success of the British counter-measures entirely defeated the reckless hopes and promises with which the German admirals had pleaded for the unrestricted campaign. The result was, of course, increased activity, for this was Germany's last throw for victory. Admiral von Capelle, formerly Secretary for the Navy, has given some remarkable evidence before a Committee of Inquiry in Berlin as to the nature of this fresh effort. In the summer of 1917, as soon as it became apparent that England could not be brought low within the specified period of five or six months, he established the U-boat Office as a separate section of the Navy Department, and thenceforward he, and Scheer after him, treated its requirements as paramount. "Everything else went to the wall." It was frankly admitted that the imperfect estimate of British tenacity and "sporting spirit" had caused the disappointment; the delay and the wastage of boats must be made good by enormously increased production. "During 1916," he said, "the urgent task of repairing the damage suffered by the German Fleet at Jutland had imposed a heavy additional strain upon the dockyards. A fleet of sweepers had also to be built to cope with the mine-laying operations." We know from other sources that among the things which now had to go to the wall were included not only mine-sweepers, but the High Sea Fleet itself. Some battleships were scrapped for material, others were depleted of their crews. The result was a prodigious increase in output. The Grand-Admiral had ordered 186 U-boats during the earlier part of the war. Capelle, who had turned out



90 in the last nine months of 1916, ordered 269 during 1917, and 220 in the following year. The tonnage output was thus raised from 4000 tons a month under Tirpitz to 14,000 under Capelle.

The number of boats actually at work, however, did not rise in this proportion. It reached the maximum of 44 in February 1917, and 66 in June. The average number actually at sea during 1917 and 1918 was only 47.

The losses among these were formidable not only from a material but still more from a moral point of view. By the end of July 1917 the Admiralty had marked 68 reports of the sinking of U-boats as "certainties," and 13 were added to these in August. The figures do not tally with the German admissions, because the reports naturally came into the two Admiralties on different dates and often in different months, but Admiral Koch's official return is significant enough. He gives the U-boat losses as two in February 1917, nine in September, and nine in October. The total for the nine months is 49—just double the number expected, and the Admiral evidently did not care to give the figures for the remainder of the year.

While the Navy was conducting its great anti-submarine campaign with admirable resolution and ingenuity, the nation was entering upon a period of endurance. The year may be said to have been free from apprehension, but marked by anxiety which fluctuated from month to month according to the nature of the incidents and the amount of the tonnage losses reported. In January the *Ivernia* transport and the old battleship *Cornwallis* were torpedoed in the Mediterranean. On the 22nd there was a de-

stroyer fight in the North Sea in which one British and one German boat were sunk. In February the liners *California* and *Laconia* were torpedoed, the *Tyndareus* transport and a destroyer were mined, and on the 25th Margate and Broadstairs were bombarded. In March three destroyers were mined and one torpedoed, the hospital ship *Asturias* was sunk and Ramsgate and Dunkirk were bombarded. On the 22nd the *Moewe* returned to Germany from her second voyage. On April 7 we attacked Zeebrugge, and on the 26th and 27th Dunkirk and Ramsgate were again bombarded by the enemy. The hospital ship *Salta* was mined on the 9th, and on the 17th the hospital ships *Lanfranc* and *Donegal* were torpedoed. Admiral Scheer alleges in justification of such acts that our hospital ships "under cover of the Red Cross flag were patently used for the transport of troops." This statement is untrue and no evidence is offered in support of it.

Public indignation in England was running high, and on the 22nd an outburst of enthusiasm greeted the news of a picturesque miniature battle fought on the night of the 20th by the Dover Patrol. Two destroyers, *Swift* and *Broke*, had sighted six modern enemy destroyers within a few miles of Dover. They were attempting a hasty bombardment of the town, when *Swift* dashed at them and opened fire. Captain E. R. G. R. Evans in *Broke* was preparing to ram the nearest enemy when his first lieutenant, Despard, sank her with a torpedo, and Captain Evans instantly swung his ship in time to avoid her and ram the next destroyer, G 42. A number of the enemy's men, in terror of *Broke's* guns, clambered on to the fore-castle of the British ship, and were there killed in

hand-to-hand fight. The other four German destroyers then fled, leaving the *Broke* with 140 prisoners and 57 casualties.

In May the *Transylvania* transport and the hospital ship *Dover Castle* were torpedoed in the Mediterranean, and the *Hilary*, armed merchantman, in the North Sea. Fourteen drifters were also lost by an Austrian attack on the Italian barrage in the Adriatic. On the other hand the Zeppelin L 22 was destroyed in the North Sea, and on May 17 came another cheering announcement—a flotilla of twenty American destroyers arrived to join in the anti-submarine campaign. The American troops were now being passed over to Europe, more than half of them in British ships and under British convoy. The only loss incurred was on June 27, when the American transport *Armada* was torpedoed in the Atlantic. This month we lost the *Cameronian* transport in the Mediterranean, and sank in the Channel the German destroyer S 20 and the Zeppelin Z 43.

The last months of the year brought two successes and two misfortunes. On October 11 a convoy of eleven ships, and on December 12 a convoy and a destroyer, were lost in the North Sea. On the other hand, on November 3, a German auxiliary cruiser and ten patrol boats were sunk in a brilliant little action in the Kattegat, and on the 17th our light cruisers raided the Bight of Heligoland and drove in some enemy cruisers with visible damage. On December 26 the Government replaced Admiral Jellicoe by Admiral Rosslyn Wemyss as First Sea Lord.



## 8. 1918

The year of victory began badly. For nearly six months the course of the war, so far as it was known to the public, brought little but discouragement. The final German offensive was coming upon the western front, and there were well-founded rumours that it would fall upon the British line, which had been extended and weakened to relieve the French. The Government were appealed to from December onwards by the military chiefs abroad to send reinforcements from England. There were 300,000 troops in the country, and the greater part of these were eventually sent to the front in a single fortnight, but only after the fall of the staggering blow which they would have enabled Sir Douglas Haig to parry. This costly and dangerous mistake, the greatest made on our side during the war, would have been avoided if the Cabinet had realised the naval and military position of the Germans. They listened instead to military advisers at home who professed to believe that the Germans could spare an army for an invasion oversea, and that the British Navy, at the height of its power, was for the first time incompetent to deal with it. During this trying period of real apprehension the chiefs of the active army had the indignant sympathy of all who knew the facts. It was felt that a country which, even to secure its own coast-line, could sacrifice the flower of its armies at the front, would be incurring a charge of selfishness as well as of military ineptitude; but unfortunately the country was not consulted in the matter.

On January 14 Yarmouth was bombarded for the third time. A week later came a report from the

Aegean which seemed like an echo from the distant days at the beginning of the war. Early on the morning of January 20 the *Goeben* and *Breslau* passed down the Dardanelles to attack two British monitors lying in harbour at Imbros. The destroyers *Lizard* and *Tigress* engaged the enemy and hampered him by smoke screens, but they could do little against such antagonists. The monitors were soon sunk, but the *Breslau* immediately afterwards ran into a mine-field and was destroyed. The *Goeben* was attacked by British aeroplanes, and in attempting to retreat also struck a mine. Four Turkish destroyers came down to her support but were driven up the Straits again by *Lizard* and *Tigress*. The *Goeben*, listing heavily, was run ashore in the Narrows, and the airmen had hopes of destroying her, but she was eventually patched up and brought back to Constantinople. On February 24 the commerce-raider *Wolf* returned to Germany from her second cruise.

On March 21 Dunkirk was again bombarded, and at 4.45 on the same morning the German offensive opened against the fifty miles of British front between Croisilles and the Oise. The weakened line of the Fifth Army was penetrated and forced back with heavy loss. After four days of success Hindenburg declared that "the thing was over," and a storm of violent and triumphant feeling broke out all over Germany. By April 6 the thirty-seven British divisions engaged had at last succeeded in holding the seventy-three German divisions attacking them, but on that day Ludendorff began a second offensive between Lens and Armentières. This again, after much ground had been lost, was checked on April 21, and reinforcements were now in hand, but there was

great anxiety as to the direction and force of the enemy's next attack. At this moment the Navy struck a resounding blow which helped to cheer the nation in a dark hour, and moved the admiration of our enemies, even while they denied its utility.

The ports of Ostend and Zeebrugge had, during the past two years, become more and more important to the Germans. Their loss would have been, as Admiral Scheer said, "a very disagreeable blow to the U-boat campaign." They had, therefore, been more and more strongly guarded and fortified against attack. The section of coast upon which they lie had a system of defensive batteries, which included no less than 120 heavy guns, some of them of 15-inch calibre. A battery of these was upon the Mole at Zeebrugge—a solid stone breakwater more than a mile long, which contained also a railway terminus, a seaplane station, very large sheds for personnel and material, and at the extreme seaward end a lighthouse with search-light and range-finder. An attacking force must reckon with a large number of defenders on the Mole alone, besides the batteries and reinforcements on shore, and the destroyers and other ships in the harbour. But the attack on the Mole was an indispensable part of the enterprise now determined upon, for the enemy's attention was to be diverted from the block-ships which were to arrive during the fight and be sunk in the mouth of the canal, and in order to deal satisfactorily with the Mole, it must be cut off from the reinforcements on shore by the destruction of the railway viaduct which formed the landward end of it. The attack was to be a surprise, conducted in person by Vice-Admiral Roger Keyes commanding the Dover Patrol. The enemy's search-



lights were to be blinded by an artificial fog or smoke screen, and it was necessary that the work should all be done within an hour and a half, since the approach and retirement would each take up two hours of the short night.

For the Zeebrugge attack, the more important of the two, there was needed, besides the block-ships, a fleet of smoke-boats, motor-launches, monitors, and destroyers, with a submarine to be used as a fire-ship. The landing on the Mole was to be made from the old cruiser *Vindictive*, accompanied by two old Mersey ferry-boats, *Daffodil* and *Iris*. The three destroyers were *North Star* (Lieut.-Commander Helyar), *Phoebe* (Lieut.-Commander Gore-Langton), and the Admiral's flagship *Warwick*.

Precisely at midnight the *Vindictive*, emerging from the smoke screen, ran alongside the Mole under fire, with *Iris* ahead of her and *Daffodil* bows on against her to keep her in position. Eighteen brows or gangways were run out, and the storming party dashed across them under a heavy barrage, *Daffodil's* men passing across the *Vindictive*. In spite of severe losses three to four hundred men landed in a few minutes, silenced the batteries on the Mole, cleared the dug-outs, burnt or blew up the whole range of hangars and store-sheds, and sank a destroyer with bombs from the parapet. Then, fifteen minutes after *Vindictive's* arrival, the submarine C 3, carrying several tons of high explosive, ran in under command of Lieutenant Sandford, R.N., between the piles of the railway viaduct connecting the Mole with the shore and blew up with a terrific explosion, destroying the viaduct with a large number of Germans and machine-guns upon it. The submarine's crew

of six, though all wounded, escaped in a small motor-boat.

Ten minutes later the block-ships rounded the lighthouse and headed for the canal entrance under very heavy fire. *Thetis* (Commander Sneyd), the first of them, caught her propeller in a defence net and sank prematurely, though in the channel. The other two, *Intrepid* (Lieutenant Stuart Bonham-Carter) and *Iphigenia* (Lieutenant Billyard-Leake), succeeded in passing through the canal entrance and advancing two or three hundred yards inside the shore lines. Both were successfully placed across the channel and sunk; their crews were taken off by boats and motor-launches. In the meantime Wing-Commander Brock, the designer of the smoke screen, had sacked the lighthouse, charged a battery, and fallen desperately wounded.

The work being now done the ships were ordered away under heavy fire from the shore guns. The three landing ships and two of the destroyers got safely out to sea; *North Star* was sunk by gun-fire near the block-ships, but her crew were brought off by *Phoebe*. Of the motor-launches under command of Captain R. Collins, which performed feats of incredible audacity at point-blank range, all returned but two.

The Ostend expedition under Commodore Hubert Lynes was not so successful. Two old cruisers, *Sirius* and *Brilliant*, were to be sunk between the wooden piers of the harbour, but the wind changed suddenly, revealing the attack, the flares were extinguished by gun-fire, and the block-ships failing to find the entrance were blown up some distance to the east of the piers. A second attack was therefore

made on May 9, when Admiral Keyes was himself present. The block-ship this time was the *Vindictive* herself. She was taken in by Commander Godsall, late of the *Brilliant*, under cover of a general bombardment by monitors, destroyers, and seaplanes. After twice missing her mark in the darkness, she was sunk under heavy fire at an angle of forty-five degrees across the channel, with the loss of her commander, three other officers, and sixteen men killed, and four officers and eight men wounded. The survivors were taken off under very deadly machine-gun fire by motor-launches under Lieutenant Bourke and Lieutenant Geoffrey Drummond, both of the R.N.V.R. There were nine German destroyers in the harbour, but from beginning to end of the proceedings they made no attempt at a counter-stroke, nor did they even follow up the retirement of the victorious flotilla.

A report was afterwards spread, and to some extent credited even in this country, that the Zeebrugge enterprise was ordered by the Government for the purely political object of distracting attention from our misfortunes abroad. Whether the sacrifice of life for such a purpose would have been justifiable need not be now considered, for the expedition had a legitimate naval object, and was in fact planned in the previous November. Further, the actual date was fixed by practical and not political considerations. Very special conditions of time, tide, and weather were necessary for success; the flotilla had twice started during the early part of the year and been forced to return. The final venture was made upon the first favourable opportunity. The great moral support given by so splendid a feat of arms was a gift from the Navy to the Government.



For the 24th, the day after the Zeebrugge attack, Admiral Scheer planned an "advance" of the High Sea Fleet to the Norwegian coast for the purpose of attacking a British convoy. For this enterprise, which could only be of importance if it led to a fleet action, he assembled "all warships at his disposal." Admiral Hipper was to attack the convoy with the Battle-Cruiser Fleet, while the Battleship Squadrons were to take up a position from which they could support him. The whole expedition was to proceed behind a new protective mine-field laid off Horn's Reef for the purpose. The journey through the mine-fields passed off without a hitch, and the ships were thought to be in safety for the night, but at 8 next morning the battleship *Moltke* reported "grave damage, speed 4 knots," and at 10.40 A.M. Admiral Hipper's command returned. The *Moltke* was taken in tow, and Admiral Scheer, though anxious to avoid an encounter with the Grand Fleet, felt obliged to return with her through the North Sea instead of the Kattegat in spite of the possibility of being attacked by superior forces. This expedition, "the last which the High Sea Fleet was able to undertake," furnishes a good illustration of its weakness and the extreme caution with which it had to be handled.

The U-boat campaign was also by this time visibly failing. By June the monthly sinkings accomplished by the U-boats had fallen 50 per cent, and the decline filled Admiral Scheer with anxiety. "Many a U-boat with a splendid and experienced commander did not return. The new commanders had to gain experience under considerably less favourable conditions." Moreover, the experience was not available for long. Few

of them returned from a third cruise, practically none from a fourth. In spite of the great number of boats ordered, the supply actually obtained was insufficient. Eight hundred and ten contracts placed by the Admiralty during the war produced only 360 boats, of which 184 or more were destroyed at sea, and between 15 and 20 sunk by the Germans themselves. Only 74 new boats were built in the nine months, January to September, and these were barely sufficient to cover the losses, while "the successes of individual U-boats had steadily decreased." The English and Americans were building fast; "it was to be feared that within a short time the newly constructed tonnage would be greater than the amount sunk." Germany, on the other hand, had reached the limit of her resources. When the U-boat Office in June demanded the immediate supply of 2200 skilled workmen and 900 more for October 1, the Supreme Army Command replied with a refusal. The Army could not afford the men, the people at home could no longer cover, by a long way, the losses at the front. In the meantime the American Army was crossing the Atlantic in safety to the number of millions.

It was in these desperate circumstances that Ludendorff launched his last offensive on May 27 between Rheims and Soissons, and that on June 15 the Austrians attacked the Italian front on the Piave. Both efforts, after a brief success, exhausted themselves, and on July 18 Foch at last struck back with his reserves. On August 8 Haig began that famous drive against the strongest sector of the German front, which ended in the capture of all their fortified lines, 188,000 prisoners, and nearly 3000 guns. In Septem-

ber the St. Mihiel salient collapsed under an American attack, and the Bulgarian front was completely crushed by the French, Serbians, and British under General Franchet d'Esperey and the Serbian Marshal Mishitch. In the same month General Allenby destroyed the Turkish armies in Palestine on the plain of Esdraelon. The end was now in sight; and, in view of the Peace Conference, Admiral Scheer, who had on August 11 left the Fleet and succeeded Holtzen-dorff as Chief of the Staff, felt it advisable to have a strong weapon in the shape of U-boats, with which to bring pressure on the enemy. But men no longer volunteered for this service; they had to be "de-tailed." Officers were attracted by the heavy bonus on the sinkings which they reported, but it was evidently felt that those in training were in need of encouragement. At Admiral Scheer's suggestion, the Kaiser inspected the training school on September 24, and gave an address on board the school-ship. No one, says Admiral Scheer, had the vaguest notion that in a few weeks the U-boat campaign would be abandoned, but the tone of the speech was grave. "Involuntarily one thought: *Morituri te salutant.*" On the last day of the month the Kaiser received Admiral Scheer again, and told him that Germany had lost the war. "The Army and the people had behaved splendidly, but unfortunately the politicians had not. The Imperial Chancellor had informed him that he must go." In October followed the surrender of Bulgaria, Turkey, and Austria, and the request of Germany for an armistice. The Navy held the Army responsible for accepting the evacuation of occupied territory, and attempted to reserve its rights in the U-boat campaign. The War Cabinet,



however, undertook on October 19 that the principles of cruiser warfare should be observed, and the lives of non-combatants assured. This was opposed on behalf of the Navy by Vice-Chancellor Payer, as being equivalent to an admission that the campaign hitherto had been contrary to law. "The U-boat campaign must not be abandoned; the Navy must not stop fighting before the Army." On October 1, however, the U-boats received orders of recall, and an order was issued for a more desperate alternative. "The forces of the High Sea Fleet are to be made ready for attack and battle with the English Fleet." A plan by Hipper directed against the English Channel was sanctioned by Scheer, and the Fleet was assembled in the outer roads of Wilhelmshaven on October 28. In the meantime, however, Ludendorff had resigned, and fundamental changes had taken place in the German constitution. The peace negotiations were being carried on by a Government of the People, to which the military forces were now subject. This was disappointing to the militarists, though they had been the first to give way under the hopelessness of the situation. They suffered a still bitterer disappointment on October 29, when the crews of the High Sea Fleet declined to be uselessly sacrificed in a battle, with no object and no hope of avoiding destruction. When the Commander-in-Chief prepared to weigh anchor, a mutiny broke out in the battleships and first-class cruisers, and he thought it incumbent upon him to desist from his project. The rebellious movement spread quickly, and three days afterwards he was obliged to report that it was impossible to undertake an offensive with the Fleet. On November 9 Admiral Scheer saw the Kaiser for the last time,

and urged, in the traditional Byzantine manner, that if he resigned, the Navy would be without a leader. The Kaiser, who was no longer a kaiser, replied, "I have no longer a Navy."

The same day he obeyed the order conveyed to him by the Imperial Chancellor and abdicated, flying immediately afterwards from his own former subjects to take shelter in Holland. Then followed the "cataract of crowns" foretold by the Roumanian statesman more than four years before. A Socialist Government signed the armistice terms on the 11th. They amounted to an unconditional surrender by Germany, for the American President had laid down that "only such an armistice can justifiably be taken into consideration as will place the United States and the Powers allied to them in a position which will make it possible for them to enforce the fulfilment of dispositions that shall be made, and make it impossible for Germany to renew hostilities." Marshal Foch also, when receiving the German envoys, made it unmistakably clear to them that the armistice was not a matter of bargain, but of a submissive request on their part, and that they would have no power of discussing the conditions upon which they yielded up all possibility of resistance to the will of their conquerors.

Even more clearly symbolic of unconditional and absolute submission was the surrender of the German Fleet which followed on November 21. A week before, the German Admiral Meurer had been piped aboard the *Queen Elizabeth*, where the British Commander-in-Chief, Sir David Beatty, spent the midnight hours in arranging with him the details of the ceremony. To Nelson, whose portrait looked down upon them,

the subject of the conference would have seemed a strange one—almost the only imaginable phase of naval war beyond his own experience. Fourteen great battleships, seven light cruisers, and fifty new destroyers were to rendezvous fifty miles from May Island, not to fight their enemy, but to be shepherded tamely to his anchorage. At daybreak on the 21st the British Fleet went out to meet them, sceptical, silent, contemptuously regretful. In the port column went the First and Sixth Light-Cruiser Squadrons, the First Cruiser Squadron, the Fifth Battle Squadron, the Sixth Battle Squadron—of American battleships—followed by the Second Battle Squadron and the *Queen Elizabeth*, the First Battle-Cruiser Squadron and the Fourth Light-Cruiser Squadron. In the starboard column were the Third Light-Cruiser Squadron, the Fourth and First Battle Squadrons, the Second Battle-Cruiser Squadron and the Seventh Light-Cruiser Squadron. Between these lines at 9.20 A.M. the light cruiser *Cardiff*, as directing ship, led in the German ships. Behind them, when they had passed, the British ships turned each sixteen points outwards, and brought their prizes into the Firth of Forth. Since Carthage surrendered her fleet to the Romans, no such pageant had been known in the history of the nations. Its dignity was sadly tarnished six months later when the admiral responsible for these battle-worn ships broke his trust and sank them at Scapa Flow, covering what might have been remembered as a national tragedy with the ignominy of a puerile bravado. The hundred and fifty submarines surrendered afterwards will live longer in the world's memory. Their record is blackened by the unparalleled cruelty with which they



were used, but their campaign was at any rate a serious challenge to the Power which held control of the sea, and a challenge is vain unless the challenger is at least willing, as in Napoleon's days, to assert his pre-eminence in open conflict.

## CHAPTER IV

### CORONEL

It is perhaps in naval warfare that intensely dramatic moments are most likely to occur. There were a number of these in the late war, and some among them present a picture to which the imagination is hardly able to respond. But there is one especially which is not only difficult to imagine but difficult to understand. The battle of Coronel will always retain for us much of the painful intensity with which the first news of it impressed us, because we are still, as we were then, unable to fathom the decision which was the proximate cause of the disaster. The mystery is an insoluble one, none the less insoluble because we now have all the data before us but one. The action itself, as we have seen, was a very simple affair and comparatively unimportant. It was unimportant because it had, and could have, no lasting or decisive results : it could only provoke a more effective effort from the Power whose strength was immeasurably the greater. As a fight its duration was short, and from beginning to end of it the known forces of the two squadrons worked out precisely as they might have been expected to do. A small and weak squadron met a rather larger and much stronger one ; the admiral and two ships were lost, and the other two driven from the sphere of operations. So simple are

these facts that they raise immediately the question which can never be answered or left without an answer, the desire to know why and under what pressure of the human will such an action was ever fought at all.

There are fortunately no permanently regrettable elements in the problem. Our national pride was speedily healed, and the belief of the service in one of its finest officers was never dimmed for a moment by the cloud which veils the last and perhaps the most heroic and serviceable decision of his life. We may inquire without anxiety, and though certainty is beyond our reach the evidences are now as complete as they can ever be—complete enough to enable every one who desires it to make a judgement which will for him be final and satisfactory. For the rest, perhaps for the greater number, the mystery will remain, but it will continue to move none but sympathetic feeling.

What we have to do here is to separate the internal from the external facts, to trace as it were upon the chart of Cradock's mind the converging lines of force which met, and moved him to action, at five o'clock on November 1, 1914. These were, first, his general conception of the work upon which he was employed ; then the specific instructions which he had received from the Admiralty and their answer to certain representations of his own ; the detail of the opposing forces in terms of speed and gun power and his own experience in such matters ; the nature of the choices open to him in the circumstances, and lastly, the character of the man who had to make the decision. The first of these has hitherto received little attention, possibly because a naval man would have, and a landsman would not have, the power of instinctively



putting himself in Cradock's place. But to any one who both knows the service and reflects on the position, it will seem clear that Cradock must have had a view of his duty and his command which would go considerably beyond a mere obedience to definite instructions. Over and above the margin of discretion allowed to every admiral commanding a squadron in time of war, there must have been a further line of imaginative responsibility at once stronger and more flexible than the mechanical outline of literal obedience. An over-sanguine officer might have scoured the sea recklessly, an inexperienced one might have been careless about gun-power, an impatient one might have felt himself inadequately supported and fought angrily to prove it, an inefficient one might have been caught by surprise or unequal to the task of extricating himself. Cradock, of course, was neither over-sanguine, inexperienced, impatient, nor inefficient, but he certainly brought to his work a strong personal element. He was fearless, he believed in himself and the men he commanded, he may well have been fired by an honourable ambition for himself and for them. The task which had been allotted to him in the greatest of all wars and against the most dangerous of all enemies was certainly one to stir the chivalrous imagination. To Cradock's friends it is conceivable that he saw himself and his squadron pitted, as it were in single combat, on the gigantic field of two oceans, and under the eyes of a whole world, against an unequal force which might be disabled if it could not be destroyed. It is possible, in short, that in his conception of his duty both honour and success appeared to him attainable, though not by victory.

We come now to the instructions received by him from the Admiralty. These were naturally subject to change and consultation, for the conditions of the work to be done were uncertain and constantly shifting. Admiral von Spee's forces were considerable, but they were not concentrated. The *Emden*, the *Karlsruhe*, the *Dresden*, and the *Königsberg* were known to be dispersed upon the trade routes. There was no possibility of knowing whether, in the event of their meeting with great success, the *Leipzig* and the *Nürnberg* might not also be detailed for commerce-destroying. Spee himself, with the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, was at large in the Pacific with the opportunity before him either of hunting down isolated cruisers, or of supporting any of his own ships against a pursuing force, or of concentrating for a dash upon the Australian and New Zealand convoys or the East Indian ports. The value of sea-power for striking swift and incalculable blows has never been more clearly illustrated, and no better proof could be given of the reality of British supremacy than the success with which, in seventeen weeks, the second naval Power in the world was hunted from the face of the Seven Seas.

Admiral von Spee was first heard of on August 6, steaming south-east near the Solomon Islands. On the 12th the *Dresden* appeared off the Amazon, and the *Karlsruhe* at Curaçao. Admiral Cradock, who on August 2 was in Kingston harbour, Jamaica, flying his flag in the *Suffolk*, sailed north to meet the *Good Hope* and fell in with the *Karlsruhe*, who escaped him by superior speed. Cradock then transferred his flag to the *Good Hope*, and on August 22, upon orders from the Admiralty, he took *Glasgow*, *Monmouth*,

and *Otranto*, and went farther south to search for the *Dresden*. On August 27 he detached Captain Luce with *Glasgow* and *Monmouth*, while he himself swept the coast of South America on a line 100 miles broad with *Good Hope*, *Berwick*, and *Bristol*. Captain Luce, on rejoining, reported that a number of German colliers had been located in the Magellan Straits. Cradock in turn sent on this information to the Admiralty as possibly pointing to a general concentration by Admiral von Spee. The Admiralty's reply to this was an order to remain upon the South American station and to place the *Canopus*, which would be sent to him, to act as guardship for his secret base at Abrolhos Rocks. Cradock, accordingly, moved down towards the River Plate. On September 14 Spee, with *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, appeared suddenly off Samoa, but found the harbour empty and the German flag no longer flying. When this news reached the Admiralty, it was at once realised that Spee was making for the Chilian coast or to round the Horn. It was clear that in order to deal successfully with the German concentration, Cradock had at present neither the numbers nor the gun-power necessary. The *Scharnhorst* and the *Gneisenau* were well armed, and were among the prize gunnery ships of the German Navy. For an overmatch to them, the obvious ships to send out were battle-cruisers, but at the moment it was difficult to see how any of these could be spared. The battle-cruiser squadron in the North Sea, until the *Tiger* joined it, was not more than sufficient to deal with the battle-cruisers of the High Sea Fleet. There were in the Mediterranean two other battle-cruisers, *Indefatigable* and *Indomitable*, but these were required to guard



against a possible doubling back of the *Goeben* from Constantinople, the French unfortunately having no cruisers fast and powerful enough to cope with her. There was, however, another fast British cruiser, the *Defence*, and it was decided that she, with one of the Indefatigables, should be sent to reinforce Admirals Stoddart and Cradock, and they were actually brought as far as Malta. Their orders were then cancelled on the ground that the warlike attitude of Turkey was making the Mediterranean situation more dangerous. At this moment the orders in Cradock's possession were those of September 14, directing him to make the Falkland Islands his coaling base, and to concentrate a squadron strong enough to meet *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, then to search the Magellan Straits, but to be ready to return and cover the River Plate or search for the detached German cruisers. There was also included this significant instruction: "Until *Defence* joins, keep at least *Canopus* and one County class with your flagship."

It is plain then that the Admiralty was fully awake to the seriousness and necessities of the situation. They could not send a battle cruiser, they were sending an older battleship and the *Defence*; but at this moment fresh information was received. *Spee*, it appeared, had gone north-west from Samoa, and might therefore be considered to have abandoned his concentration. Cradock was accordingly now ordered to take only two cruisers and an armed liner, and to attack German trade on the west coast of America and Magellan. He started on September 22, but, hearing on the 26th that the *Dresden* also was certainly on the west coast and probably based on Orange Bay, he attempted a surprise attack by

passing without lights, in snow-storms and on a dark night, through the difficult Cockburn Channel. Neither on this occasion, nor on a subsequent visit, did he find any German ships in Orange Bay, and early in October he sent Captain Luce forward to search towards the north. The Admiralty now sent him information and fresh orders. He might have to meet *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* and one other cruiser. *Canopus*, which had now reached Abrolhos Rocks, was to "accompany *Glasgow*, *Monmouth*, and *Otranto*," and again the significant words were added: "The ships to search and protect trade in combination." Further, if he went himself in *Good Hope* he was to detach *Monmouth* to cover the east coast. It is clear that this last suggestion did not in itself run counter to Cradock's own view of the situation, for in one of the two parts of his reply, he himself suggested that it was necessary to have a British force on the east as well as the west side: otherwise Spee might give him the slip, pass into the Atlantic and make for the West Indies, destroying our coaling stations on the way. But with regard to the other part of his instructions, he was not satisfied. Being now better informed than the Admiralty, he took a more serious view of the force he would probably have to meet. His telegram of October 8 reports that: "Indications show possibility of *Dresden*, *Leipzig*, *Nürnberg* joining *Gneisenau* and *Scharnhorst*. Have ordered *Canopus* to Falkland Islands, where I intend to concentrate and avoid division of forces. Have ordered *Glasgow*, *Monmouth*, and *Otranto* not to go north of Valparaiso until German cruisers are again located." He then suggested that *Cornwall* should come south, and asked, "Does *Defence* join

my command?" This telegram, which did not arrive till the 12th, met with a substantial approval at the Admiralty. It was realised that adequate forces must be prepared to meet *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, and that both coasts must be protected. The reply on October 14 informed him that his plan of concentrating *Good Hope*, *Canopus*, *Monmouth*, *Glasgow*, and *Otranto* "for combined operation" was approved, and that Admiral Stoddart would take over the defence of the east coast with *Carnarvon*, *Cornwall*, and *Bristol*, the auxiliary cruisers *Macedonia* and *Orama*, and the *Defence* to be sent from the Mediterranean. This set Cradock free once more to operate on the west coast so soon as the *Canopus* should join him. She arrived on the 22nd, a week late. On the 18th Cradock, already informed of her deficient speed, telegraphed to the Admiralty that her presence would reduce his squadron to 12 knots, but he trusted that circumstances would enable him to force the enemy to action. This message has a double importance. It shows clearly, as Sir Julian Corbett has remarked, that the instruction to "search and protect trade" conveyed to him an order to seek out the enemy and fight him. It also shows that he was aware of the difficulty caused by the *Canopus'* speed, that he did not then intend to get over it by leaving the slow ship behind, and it is probably a fair inference that among the favourable circumstances which might help him to bring on an action he included the difficulty his adversary must have in keeping up his coal supply. Nevertheless, when the *Canopus* arrived on October 22, in need of overhauling, he decided that he could not wait for her. Spee might be making for the Horn at any moment,



and must be met. He therefore went with his inadequate squadron to block the way himself, and ordered *Canopus*, when ready, to cut through the Straits and join him on the other side. The boldness of this action has an obvious bearing on the question of his final decision to fight on November 1; but we know for certain that, though prepared for an unequal fight if necessary, he was in no rash or thoughtless mood. On joining Captain Luce's detachment on October 26, he telegraphed home as follows: "With reference to orders contained in Admiralty telegram received October 7, to search for enemy, and our great desire for early success, consider it impracticable, on account of *Canopus*' slow speed, to find and destroy enemy squadron. Consequently have ordered *Defence* to join me. *Canopus* will be employed on necessary convoy of colliers." The Admiralty meanwhile, considering *Good Hope*, *Canopus*, *Glasgow*, and *Monmouth* sufficiently strong to meet *Spee*, had ordered *Defence* to remain on the east coast under Admiral Stoddart. On receiving Cradock's telegram, however, they cancelled their own orders to *Defence* in order to leave her at Cradock's disposal. The new order may, or may not, have reached Cradock, but before it could do so he had already ordered up the *Canopus* with the colliers from the Straits and sent the *Glasgow* north to Coronel for Admiralty messages.

On the 29th German wireless messages in cypher were taken in, and Cradock sailed northward after the *Glasgow* on the 30th, meeting the *Canopus* as he started. She was again, however, in need of twenty-four hours' repairing, and he left her behind. On the 31st he again telegraphed home his intention of sailing north. This time he did not mention the

*Canopus*, and the Admiralty, in view of his former proposal to employ her with the colliers, now told him that the *Defence* would join him, and that he was not expected to act without the *Canopus*.

This order was one of the first acts of the new Board of Admiralty, in which Lord Fisher was First Sea Lord, and it will be noted that though the seriousness of the situation was obvious, there was nothing new in the steps taken to meet it. The *Canopus* had already been sent and the *Defence* ordered to join. The new instructions only emphasised the intention that both these ships should eventually form part of Cradock's force.

But this telegram never reached Cradock. It is therefore merely an indication of Admiralty intentions, and has only a remote bearing upon what may have been in Cradock's mind. He sailed on November 1 with *Good Hope*, *Monmouth*, and *Otranto* to rendezvous with *Glasgow* fifty miles west of Coronel and search for *Leipzig*, whose wireless he heard signalling in front of him. Admiral von Spee, at the same moment, was sweeping to cut off the *Glasgow*, and when the two fleets sighted one another between four and five o'clock, the meeting was an equal surprise to both of them.

The German squadron was rather dispersed, but by 4.40 the presence of *Scharnhorst*, *Gneisenau*, and *Leipzig* was reported. *Dresden* and *Nürnberg* were at first out of sight to the north. This last point is not unimportant, for *Glasgow*, *Monmouth*, and *Otranto* at once steamed back at full speed towards the flagship, and at 5.10, when Cradock signalled to his squadron to concentrate on the *Glasgow*—the ship nearest the enemy—he was almost certainly under the

impression that he had only three enemy ships in front of him. But even so, he could not possibly have thought the match an equal one.

The fighting value of the two squadrons was to be estimated from the following figures. The *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* were ships of 11,420 tons and a speed of over 23 knots; they were less than seven years old, and each carried eight guns of 8·2 inches and six of 5·9 inches. The *Dresden* and *Nürnberg* were six-year-old ships of 3400 and 3600 tons, and their speed was 23 and 24 knots, the *Leipzig* was two years older and one knot slower; they were all three armed with ten 4-inch guns. To meet these Cradock had one newer ship, the *Glasgow*, built in 1910, of 4800 tons, armed with two 6-inch and ten 4-inch guns. The *Monmouth*, built in 1903, was of 9800 tons, and armed with fourteen 6-inch guns. *Good Hope*, a year older still, was of 14,100 tons and carried two 9·2-inch guns and sixteen 6-inch. The *Otranto* was an auxiliary cruiser with four 4·7-inch guns, but she had no fighting value, and could not be engaged in such an action as this. The speed of Cradock's squadron was on paper almost exactly that of Spee's, the slowest ships being equal; but the *Glasgow* was a good knot faster than any other ship present. In sum the two squadrons may be compared as follows. The tonnage on each side was approximately equal—some 29,000 tons. The British guns were two 9-inch, thirty-two 6-inch, ten 4-inch, the Germans had sixteen 8-inch, twelve 6-inch, twenty 4-inch, besides a large number of 22-pounders. But to Cradock, an expert in all gunnery matters, these figures had a practical significance very different from any balance to be struck on paper. The number and calibre of the 6-inch guns



gave him a superiority over everything but the sixteen 8-inch guns of the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*. Against these he had, besides a certain margin of 6-inch power, only the two 9-inch guns of his flagship. He knew, of course, that even in the practical sphere results do not simply follow the weight of metal. He had always taught his officers that "The whole question of the 'Gunnery Might of the ship' depends on three things: firstly, Control; secondly, Accuracy; thirdly, the Personal Element. The first is no good without the second, and both are useless if the third is unsatisfactory—the condition of temperament is not half enough studied in the Quarter Bill." On these principles, and by incessant practice, he had successfully trained crews in the past. But these experiences could not supply much ground for confidence in the present. The crew of his flagship was not yet trained, being just out from home. The chance of two big guns against sixteen was nothing more than a chance. The element of temperament might possibly be in his favour. It was observed by our officers in later actions such as Jutland and *Sydney* v. *Emden* that the German gunners, who shot remarkably well when first engaging, soon lost their accuracy when they began to be hit in turn. Cradock knew the German temperament, and was aware that this might give our men an advantage, but he had been heard to say that it was of no use to count upon it—it must be put aside, with hopes that in a pinch something might come of it. The pinch was here, and there was the bare possibility that, if his two heavy guns could get in a telling shot or two at the beginning, the gunners of the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* might lose that accuracy for which they were

famous. But it must be remembered that both ships had a great gunnery reputation, and *Gneisenau* had lately won the Kaiser Medal for the Cruiser Squadron. On the whole, there can be no doubt that the engagement was one which could only be accepted with the gravest risk, and that Cradock knew it well, and had known it all along.

These considerations then were present in Cradock's mind as points already fixed; but there was another line of thought which must have claimed his attention far more insistently in the few moments left him for decision. Where he had hoped to meet his enemy in detail, he had met him in concentrated force; what were the choices open to him? They were two only, to fight or to run. During the six years which have followed the action, critics have from time to time argued, with perfect fairness and temper, that the battle of Coronel was an imprudence on Cradock's part, an error of judgement, and even an act of disobedience to orders. He had taken the risk of going on in advance of his slowest but most powerful ship, though his instructions were not to act without her. It was his duty to attempt, at any rate, to fall back upon her. In support of this contention, plans have been drawn and speeds calculated. At the moment of sighting the enemy, Cradock was almost due west of Spee; *Canopus* was coming up from the south, 250 miles away; at the normal speed of both a junction could have been effected in less than nine hours, perhaps in eight. The speed of Spee's squadron was not such as to give him the power of overtaking more than one, at most, of the British ships. It is probable that if the argument were seriously considered by naval men, it would be decisively rejected. Spee

had the position of advantage inshore : on a run south he would have been moving along a shorter side of the triangle. Moreover, for the first three hours of the chase at least, he would have had a fighting light, and when that failed, moonlight would probably rather increase than diminish the advantage of his gunners. There was also the possibility that Cradock, with the Germans jamming his wireless, as they actually did, might fail to hit the line of the advancing *Canopus*, and find himself cut off from her by his pursuers.

Whether these, or any of them, were Cradock's reasons we shall never know, but we do know that if they were, they must have been reinforced by another and a very powerful motive. With the Germans, as we have repeatedly seen during the war, method is valued above initiative, and instructions above all. The universal method and the most binding general instruction of the German Navy has been the avoidance of contact with superior forces. Only by accident, or as a result of superior British strategy, has such contact ever been brought about : the bravest of German officers, including Spee himself, have felt bound to save themselves by flight, whenever the position, or the weight of armament, was against them. The British tradition is of the opposite kind, and though far older, it is not yet obsolete or even scientifically unsound. A position of great naval power is not likely to be won by the consistent refusal of unequal fights. The maintenance of naval supremacy by such means would be impossible. Cradock, like any German officer, had to think of his orders, but he had also to think of the naval position, the position of his service as the greatest and most nearly ubiquitous power in the world. His object



was success for that service in the performance of its duty and the foiling of the enemy in the attainment of his purposes. By the British tradition, and in the British science of war, these objects are not entirely synonymous with what are ordinarily called victory and defeat. There are occasions when a British commander, like Nelson, will be well satisfied to meet and fall before a superior force if he can be sure that when it has done with him, it will have lost the power to do the harm which it intended. Knowing too the reality of that world-wide power of which he was but a single unit, he was aware that whatever loss it suffered would speedily be made good, while for his adversary all losses must be irreparable, and any but the slightest damage a serious embarrassment. Further, he had to weigh against one another two kinds of loss, moral and material. For a navy like ours there must always be material losses in war. To hold our place we must pay the price of Admiralty, and cruisers here or there are items in the account. The men are a dearer sacrifice, but their readiness to go is a great part of our strength. Greater still is the tradition which makes them what they are, and a diminution of it would be a disaster more fatal than the loss of many ships. At the moment of decision it is more than probable that what Cradock's imagination presented to him as the danger to be avoided was not the defeat of his squadron by a superior force, but the spectacle and the memory of that squadron flying desperately from the enemy for whom it had been sent to search. Such a flight would have been in itself a defeat; a surrender of the pride of many centuries to a service with neither past nor future.

It is more than possible that this single considera-

tion may have been an insuperable obstacle to any decision but that which Cradock took. But it is not likely that he acted upon any single consideration. He was a man of complex character, with a very active intelligence and quick intuition. He was capable of bearing in mind every factor of his problem and arriving almost instantly at a result, but the result must be in accordance with his own character. If we summarise the steps by which he had been led to his final position, and again if we consider the moral possibilities of the man on this side and on that, we must in either case be compelled to take a favourable view. We have seen that he took seriously a possible concentration by Spee ; that he proposed to concentrate himself, and urgently desired to be reinforced ; that he realised the special weakness of *Canopus*, but was hopeful of bringing on an action in which she would play the part assigned to her by the Admiralty. Nevertheless—and this very important piece of evidence has been generally missed—on October 22 he was willing to take the risk of sending *Canopus* through the Straits and rounding the Horn without her, to block Spee's way into the Atlantic. The effect of this upon his own mind can hardly be doubted. When it is repeated a risk is no longer the same risk. What a man is ready to dare the first time, he will find more easy to decide on when the second time comes. Not that Cradock's intellectual estimate of his chances was impaired, for on October 26 he ordered up *Defence* to take the place of *Canopus* ; yet when *Defence* could not join him at once, and *Canopus* again broke down on the 30th, he was again content to take the risk of acting without her, though this was contrary to his orders.

When a man, and especially when an officer of a great service, acts contrary to his orders, and is not at hand to justify himself, an opinion upon his conduct can only be formed by considering what is known of the circumstances and the man. In this case, we know the circumstances and their extreme difficulty. We know that the officer had shown both zeal and good judgement. He understood the letter of his orders and as much more as it was possible to understand at so great a distance and with such imperfect means of communication. For the course he took, no motive can be imagined at once credible and discreditable. A man does not fling away his command, his professional reputation, or even his own life out of sheer recklessness. From all that is known of Cradock, we may infer a very different set of motives. We know his object and the carefulness and energy with which he was pursuing it. We know his capacity for being inspired by the highest and widest understanding of his duty. It is clear that in moments of great emergency he was capable of taking responsibility upon his own shoulders, and, by the hazard of everything that he most valued, of attempting the best that was possible for his service. Even by his failure he succeeded in this. Not only did his fate draw on the annihilation of his enemy, but the brief eclipse of the British power in the Pacific was more than compensated by the example of unflinching resolution which he added to the long tradition of the Navy.



## CHAPTER V

### THE FALKLANDS

#### 1. THE COUNTER-STROKE TO CORONEL

THE battle of Coronel was fought on November 1, 1914 ; it was not until November 5 that the first news of it was given to the public by the evening newspapers. The account was not official ; it came from correspondents in Chili, and was difficult to follow. Two British ships appeared to have been sunk ; but one of them, the *Good Hope*, was also reported to have been last seen making for the coast, and it was thought that although on fire and out of action she might have succeeded in escaping or running ashore. Seeing that the information had been gathered only from the crews of some German ships which had put into Valparaiso, the Admiralty thought it necessary to warn the public against accepting the story too readily ; and an official note was issued, pointing out that "the battleship *Canopus*, which had been specially sent to strengthen Admiral Cradock's squadron, and would give him a decided superiority, is not mentioned, and further, although five German ships are concentrated in Chilian waters, only three have come into Valparaiso harbour. It is possible, therefore, that when full accounts of the action are received, they may considerably modify the German version."

So we hoped, but we hoped vainly. Letters came home from the *Glasgow* and *Otranto*; on November 17 the Admiralty published a full report from Captain Luce of the *Glasgow*, and we knew the worst.

In the meantime steps had been taken both at home and in the Falklands to deal with the emergency. The Falkland Islands, with their splendid harbour, their coal, and their wireless station, were evidently in great danger from the victorious German squadron. The small population of about 2000, mostly Scottish shepherds, was entirely defenceless, and the inhabitants of Port Stanley, the capital, made preparations for abandoning the town and taking refuge on the moors. On November 8, four days after the first receipt of the news, *Canopus* and *Glasgow* ran into Stanley harbour on their way to join Admiral Stoddart. On the 12th the *Canopus* put in again with orders to remain and defend the coaling station. Captain Grant accordingly landed his smaller guns, took his ship into the inner harbour, anchored her on a mud bank, and turned her into a fort. The narrow strip of land which divides the harbour from the sea gave her a good parapet to fire over, and to make her a more difficult target for the enemy she was repainted in "futurist" colours. The work included also the laying of electric mines and the establishment of a fire-control position on shore: it was carried out in hurricanes and snow-storms, and took three weeks to complete. Then for three days more the little garrison scanned the horizon. On December 7 smoke was signalled, and within a few hours all apprehension was at an end. The squadron which arrived was not a German but an English one of irresistible force. The Admiralty had put in hand

their preparations for the counter-stroke on November 4; the news which then reached them was incomplete, but it left no doubt of the urgent necessity for repairing the great cruiser-net where a mesh had been damaged, and for ending the career of the enemy who had broken through. The new Board of Admiralty had the same appreciation as their predecessors of the nature and extent of the danger, but they were in a more favourable position for dealing with it. The battle-cruiser squadron at Cromarty had just been powerfully reinforced, and they felt able to call upon Admiral Jellicoe to detach *Invincible* and *Inflexible* for urgent foreign service. The two ships disappeared into the Atlantic, and reached Devonport on November 8 for repairs to *Invincible*. They reported that the dockyard demanded five days for the work. Lord Fisher's reply was a peremptory order that they must sail on the 11th, if necessary with the dockyard hands on board. They sailed at 4.45 P.M. on the 11th. On the 9th the commander of the new squadron was appointed—Admiral Sturdee. He had been Chief of the Staff since the beginning of the war, and a story was put about that he was selected as a mark of reprobation, with the order to go and clear up a situation for which he was mainly responsible. It is hardly necessary to state that this view could not be seriously held by any one who knew the facts: we have already seen that the situation had been appreciated and adequate measures proposed to meet Admiral Cradock's requirements; also that Cradock himself had taken the responsibility of departing from his instructions. It may be added that it would be no sane policy to rebuke an officer for inefficiency by appointing him to this coveted mission with its



unique powers and opportunities. Admiral Sturdee was to be Commander-in-Chief in the South Atlantic and Pacific—from Pernambuco to the Horn, and from the Horn to China, a station-area such as no British admiral had ever yet commanded. The service upon which he was sent demanded perfect secrecy, and efficiency to the highest possible degree in every department. The intended blow was to be struck with the most dramatic swiftness and suddenness, and the two principal ships were to be returned to the Grand Fleet at the earliest possible moment with their fighting value unimpaired. It would be hardly an injustice to the British Navy to say that to gain such a command and such an opportunity as this, there is no professional shortcoming for which a British officer would not willingly be held responsible.

Whatever reasons the Admiralty may have had for this appointment, it was not only a good one, but even a better one than they knew. For an urgent mission such as we have described, something more than efficiency was required, for no efficiency could secure that the squadron should find the enemy at once, and find him concentrated. The good fortune which attended every order given to Admiral Sturdee was so continuous and so complete that it would almost seem as if some superior Intelligence were at the same time directing Admiral von Spee to his own destruction. Admiral Sturdee was first to make St. Vincent, Cape Verde, and thence to proceed either to the West Indies or Abrolhos Rocks, in accordance with the best guess possible at Spee's movements. Both off the Panama Canal and at Abrolhos Rocks squadrons were ready to receive the enemy—at the latter rendezvous Admiral Stoddart had *Carnarvon*,

*Cornwall*, *Defence*, and *Kent*. It was in this direction that Spee's appearance seemed most probable, and Admiral Sturdee, on leaving St. Vincent, went south, sweeping Rocas Reef on his way. During that time Admiral von Spee was actually moving south, but was delayed by unknown causes. On the 17th he rendezvoused with *Dresden* and *Leipzig*, and on the 21st he reached St. Quentin Bay and coaled. One of his colliers had procured an illicit supply at Coronel, and by so doing gave away his secret, for the Chilian authorities, having failed to stop her, reported her movement to the British Admiralty. On November 23 the news was confirmed by an intercepted German message, and it became possible to rearrange the cruiser-net in several directions and to give Admiral Sturdee definite orders. He was now to base himself on the Falklands, pass the Horn and search the Chilian coast. These instructions reached him on his arrival at Abrolhos Rocks on the 26th. There also he found Admiral Stoddart with orders to send *Defence* to join the Cape Squadron and place himself, with *Cornwall*, *Kent*, *Glasgow*, *Bristol*, and *Orama*, under Admiral Sturdee's command.

On this same day Admiral von Spee left St. Quentin Bay for a dash upon the Falklands. He was only 300 miles north of the Straits of Magellan, and would certainly have reached his objective unopposed if it had not been for the roughness of the seas which scattered his squadron, and reduced his speed incredibly. Admiral Sturdee was two days later in starting from his rendezvous and he also was delayed, by false reports. It was not until December 4 that he was able to hold on south with the certainty that his enemy was in front of him. By this time he was

again out-run; but again fortune held back his adversary. Spee had rounded the Horn on the night of December 1, but had then spent four full days in capturing a British barque and taking her coal out of her. He therefore did not start north until December 6, and lost the race by twenty-four hours instead of winning it by forty-eight.

## 2. THE MAIN ACTION

Admiral Sturdee, as we have seen, arrived on the afternoon of December 7 and proceeded immediately to coal. *Bristol* and *Glasgow* he sent into the inner harbour, Port Stanley, where they saw with amusement *Canopus* disguised as a fort: the rest of the squadron anchored in the outer harbour, Port William. The Admiral's orders were: The *Inflexible* and *Kent* to be ready with steam for 14 knots at half an hour's notice, and the rest with steam for 12 knots at two hours' notice. The squadron would leave again on the afternoon of the 9th with the hope of meeting the enemy before he could round the Horn. There were, as yet, only three colliers available; the ships could not all coal at once, but speed was an urgent necessity. In the end, after working hard all night, some of the ships were still short, and among them were both the battle-cruisers. Happily they had been built to burn oil as well as coal, and their oil supply was untouched. *Glasgow* and *Carnarvon* got their full coal supply, but *Kent*, *Cornwall*, and *Macedonia* were only beginning to coal when the enemy was sighted at 7.50 A.M. on Tuesday, December 8. Two strange ships were reported from the observation post on Sapper's Hill two miles away. *Glasgow* immediately fired an alarm



THE SOUTH ATLANTIC AND SOUTH PACIFIC.





gun, *Kent* passed down the harbour and took station outside with the *Macedonia* at 8.10: at 8.14 the Admiral made the general signal to prepare to weigh, the colliers were cast off, and all ships began raising steam as fast as possible.

In spite of imaginative German publications and the statements of German prisoners, it is impossible to be sure with what intentions Admiral von Spee was making for the Falklands. By one account he expected to find Admiral Stoddart's ships only, draw them out to sea and annihilate them. Accordingly to another his design was to destroy the *Canopus* and occupy the islands: landing parties were under orders in two of his ships. Not a word had reached him of Admiral Sturdee or the *Invincibles*. His advance ships, *Gneisenau* and *Nürnberg*, after sheering off at a couple of salvos from *Canopus*, came on again at 9.30 to attack the British guardships. Ten minutes later the *Gneisenau* was near enough to observe the masts and funnels among the smoke that was pouring up from the harbour. Some of her officers, though all were not agreed, thought that they made out the tripod masts of battle-cruisers. The German semi-official account states that the captain of the *Gneisenau* was not convinced by Commander Busch's observation, and that it is uncertain whether he mentioned the tripod masts in reporting to his admiral the presence of six ships in the harbour, but the bulk of the evidence tells the other way. Apprehensions spread quickly on the German ships. When the *Glasgow* weighed and came down the harbour to join the *Kent* outside, the *Gneisenau's* men, as one of them afterwards said, "laughed till their sides ached." The next moment they "cried till their eyes ached"



—the word had gone round that battle-cruisers had been sighted, not British, of course, but Japanese—how could British battle-cruisers have come there unexpectedly? In any case the report warned Admiral von Spee that he was in the presence of a force which he must not attempt to engage. He signalled immediately: “*Gneisenau* and *Nürnberg* not to accept action,” and directly afterwards followed the general signal: “Raise steam in all boilers; steer east.” He then seems to have waited for the two ships to rejoin him, for towards ten o’clock we are told the flagship made out six men-of-war at the entrance to the harbour, which it was thought could be identified as one “Glasgow” light cruiser, *Cornwall*, *Defence*, and another large cruiser, and two battleships, *Canopus* and *Formidable*. At 10.20 the squadron re-formed and went off on an easterly course at 20 knots. It is further stated, but not easy to believe, that it was not until towards eleven o’clock that “the two ships that had left the harbour last, which till now had been hidden in thick clouds of smoke, were recognised from their masts and funnels and their obviously superior speed as belonging to the ‘Invincible’ class.” *Inflexible*, *Invincible*, and *Cornwall* had weighed at ten o’clock, and were in fact the three large cruisers observed by the German flagship just before she gave the order for flight. It is clear that flight, and not a manœuvre, was intended, for “in order to facilitate progress, the signal was given that line ahead need not be kept.”

*Glasgow* and *Kent* were already steaming ahead to keep touch with the enemy, and Admiral Sturdee now made the signal for “general chase.” As the British squadron passed Cape Pembroke Light the

enemy's five ships were seen clearly to the south-east, hull down. No doubt the battle-cruisers were at the same time clearly visible to them, a terrible sight to those who looked back on the ever-lessening distance of sea between. It is impossible not to sympathise with Admiral von Spee ; whatever may have been Cradock's position, his was still more hopeless ; he had no chance, no doubt of what was before him, and by the tradition of his own navy he was forbidden to dare what Cradock dared, the final service and supreme honour of a forlorn hope. Where he had confidently expected another victory he found himself suddenly called upon to face inevitable death. There was no hope of an equal fight, no hope of escape ; just as it had been the Englishman's duty to fight, so it may have been the German's duty to run, but he must have felt bitterly sure that running could not save him. The sky was clear, there was a light breeze from the north-west and a calm sea ; visibility was at its maximum. Into that calm sea he and his squadron must go down in flames.

Admiral Sturdee's anxieties were of a very different kind. He knew that his opportunity, though not a perfect one, was complete and must not be spoilt. Happily he possessed all the qualities necessary for the occasion—a combination of seamanship and tactical science with a high spirit, self-confidence, and cool decision peculiarly his own. His difficulties began with the smoke of his squadron. In the condition of the wind the ships were almost smothering themselves and each other. At 10.50 he ordered *Glasgow* to keep three miles ahead of him and *Inflexible* to take station on his starboard quarter, but the smoke, in spite of all precautions, continued to

trouble him throughout the action. A second difficulty was caused by the difference between his ships in speed. *Carnarvon* at 11.7 was only going 20 knots and *Cornwall* 22. He himself had been taking the two battle-cruisers ahead at  $26\frac{1}{2}$ , but as the *Glasgow* now reported the enemy to be doing no more than 15, he eased down to 20 knots. Then, as there was time to spare before the fight could begin, minor preparations were thought of. A stand-easy had been sounded at eleven, and the ships' companies were all busy snatching arrears of breakfast, cleaning off coal-dust, and clearing for action, throwing woodwork overboard and drowning decks. Now at 11.30 the men were piped to dinner as usual, an excellent arrangement, for they had been working hard all night and all morning with little time to eat or rest. Besides if the enemy continued to run, and especially if he scattered, he must be pressed continuously lest the work should not be finished before dark.

At the moment of giving this order, Admiral Sturdee received from *Bristol* a wireless report that German ships, probably colliers or transports, had been sighted off Port Pleasant to the south of East Falkland. It was possible that they carried a landing force to attack the islands. The Admiral accordingly ordered the captain of the *Bristol* to take the *Macedonia* under his command "and destroy transports." The order to destroy was no doubt intended to be limited by the word transports; but the *Bristol* having duly caught her two allotted enemies found them to be colliers. She took the crews off and sank both vessels at once—a heavy sacrifice, for the coal was valuable, and the *Baden* and the *Santa Isabella* were fine new ships of 7000 and 5000 tons.



He had now to concentrate upon the chase. While the men went to dinner he changed course two points to starboard in order to converge upon the enemy. *Glasgow* and the *Invincibles* were still going 20 knots, but *Kent*, *Cornwall*, and *Carnarvon* were falling behind—*Carnarvon*, doing her best at 18 knots, was now six miles astern. At 12.20 the Admiral determined to force the pace and attack with his fastest ships. He increased to 22 and then to 25 knots, and in less than half an hour the *Leipzig*, the tail ship of the German line, was within range at 16,500 yards. At 12.47 the signal was made to "Open fire and engage the enemy," and at 12.55 the *Inflexible* fired from her fore-turret at the *Leipzig*. Then with the ships still closing the *Invincible* opened from 15,000 yards at the same cruiser; then both fired again, and the *Leipzig*, who was dropping astern of her squadron, could stand it no longer. She appeared, from the *Carnarvon*, to be on fire, and at 1.20 she was seen to turn away to the south-west with the *Nürnberg* and *Dresden*.

This manœuvre was in obedience to an order from Admiral von Spee, which is described as follows by executive officer Pochhammer of the *Gneisenau*: "There was nothing to be gained by retaining the light cruisers any longer, so with a heavy heart the Commander-in-Chief dismissed them, covering their reluctant retreat by an attack on the enemy's far superior forces with the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*." From what we know of the chivalrous character of the German admiral, we may feel sure that he has here been misunderstood by his subordinate. Count von Spee's duty was plain. It was to run, but to run in such a manner as to save if possible some part of his

squadron. That part could not, he knew, include his flagship or her consort. They were each inevitably marked by an invincible opponent, and the end could not be doubtful, but for the others one chance was left. They, or some of them, might escape, while he fought the action which he could not, in any case, refuse. He had no choice in the matter, but it could not have been with a heavy heart that he gave the signal for a manœuvre which accepted certain death for himself and gave others at least a chance for their lives. The men of the *Monmouth* at Coronal, when their own time came, cheered the *Glasgow* as she made off into the darkness.

The move then was an obvious one; Admiral Sturdee had foreseen it, and in accordance with his instructions, without any signal being made, *Kent*, *Glasgow*, and *Cornwall* at once followed these light cruisers while he continued himself to hunt the German Admiral. The battle thus resolved itself into two separate actions and soon afterwards into three; for *Kent* and *Nürnberg* ended by going off for a single combat far away from the rest.

The main action now began. Admiral Sturdee had a clear superiority in both speed and guns, but his problem was not one which could be solved by pitting his 12-inch guns against the German 8.2's at easy range. He was using borrowed ships, and must return them as quickly as possible and in serviceable condition. His aim, therefore, was not merely to annihilate the enemy but to do so as inexpensively as he could. His small losses and slight damage in this action are the best evidence of his skill and judgement as a fighting commander. He began by ordering *Invincible* to fire on *Gneisenau* and *Inflexible*

on *Scharnhorst*. The German ships on the other hand concentrated on *Invincible*. For them, however, the range was at first too great, and it was not till about 1.45, when *Invincible* was within 13,000 yards, that they hit her for the first time. *Inflexible* at this moment was practically not engaged, being almost completely smothered with the flagship's smoke. The duel continued under increasing difficulties until two o'clock, when the range had opened out from 13,500 to 16,500 yards, and both sides ceased firing. Five minutes later Admiral Sturdee began to close again, but at 2.10 the enemy, covered by their own smoke, turned ten points to starboard and made off at top speed after the light cruisers.

A second chase now began and lasted for thirty-five minutes. By 2.45 Admiral Sturdee had again reduced the range to 15,000 yards: he then turned two points to port to bring his whole broadside to bear, and opened fire once more. The German admiral did not reply at once: he turned sharply to port on a converging course and rapidly reduced the range. The meaning of this was clear. He was no longer under the necessity of attempting to refuse action, for such refusal was impossible. He had only to think of inflicting what damage he could before he went down. Besides his 8.2's he had six 6-inch guns in each ship; these would be effective at 12,500 yards, and as soon as that range was reached he opened fire again with every gun he had. It was now 2.59, and in ten minutes the duel between the guns and gunners of the two squadrons was irrevocably decided. The 12-inch guns were clearly superior in accuracy and weight of metal to the German 8-inch and 6-inch armament. The gunnery on each side



might have been expected to be more equal: the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* had picked crews and prize medal gunners, the *Invincibles* were average British ships, and their gunners were continually smothered by their own smoke. But as on other occasions, the superiority soon declared itself on the side which was least disturbed by the punishment it was receiving. The impact of the 12-inch shells had a disabling and probably a demoralising effect on the German gunners; the damage they were able to inflict became less and less, and entirely failed to shake the British temperament or efficiency. In ten minutes of hot fire, the *Gneisenau* was badly hit by the *Inflexible* and began to list. *Scharnhorst* had caught fire forward and her gun-fire was slackening perceptibly; at 3.15 her third funnel was shot away. A midshipman who was watching closely from the *Carnarvon* records that at one moment he felt sick at the small visible effect of our fire, and then, within twenty minutes, still sicker at the sight of the two doomed ships staggering and burning under the storm of 12-inch shells.

Admiral Sturdee seized his advantage at once. He turned his ships together eighteen points, thus reversing their course and clearing the range of smoke. *Inflexible* was now leading, and her gunnery officer records that for the first time she had a clear view of her target. When Admiral Sturdee again turned four points to cross the enemy's wake, *Inflexible* was once more smothered, but by this time the German position was desperate. The *Gneisenau* was listing so much that her 6-inch guns were out of action. The *Scharnhorst* had lost all her funnels and all the guns on her port side. Admiral von Spee made his

final effort, turning ten points to bring her starboard broadside to bear, but her time had nearly come. Clouds of smoke were pouring from her, mixed with blasts of escaping steam. From time to time a shell from the *Invincibles* would cause a large hole to appear in her side, and through it could be seen a dull red glow of fire burning between decks. In spite of this her starboard broadside after the turn came gallantly into action again, and Admiral Sturdee turned outwards to avoid the dying kick of her 6-inch guns. He then steadily closed her again, till at four o'clock she ceased firing "as suddenly as when a light is blown out." At 4.4 she listed heavily to port. As the list rapidly increased until she lay down on her beam ends, the British ships turned to re-engage the *Gneisenau*, who was obeying her admiral's last signal to save herself, while he attempted to close and attack with torpedoes, but by this time the flagship was down by the head with her propellers almost entirely out of water. At 4.17 she heeled over on to her side, her stern rose steeply and she disappeared. Admiral Sturdee records with characteristic admiration that her flag remained flying to the last.

Not a man of her company could be saved, for the *Gneisenau* was still at large, almost invisible in the smoke, and fighting hard. *Invincible* turned a complete circle to lay herself abreast of the enemy: this enabled *Inflexible* and *Carnarvon* to get up but both were blinded by the smoke, and when they came out of it at 4.50 the three ships were all on independent courses. But this was so much the worse for the *Gneisenau*; her guns were no longer effective, and she had become a target for a concentrated fire from three directions. At 5.8 P.M. her forward funnel was

seen to fall and remain resting against the second funnel. Her fire slackened, her speed dropped, she was burning fore and aft. At 5.15 she succeeded in hitting *Invincible* with a single shell, but at 5.30 Admiral Sturdee saw her suddenly turn towards him and stop dead. She had a heavy list to starboard, fires were rising all over her, and smoke and steam pouring forth in clouds. The *Invincibles* wheeled round to close, and Admiral Sturdee ordered the signal, "Cease fire"; before it could be hoisted a single gun opened fire again from the *Gneisenau* and continued at intervals, but at 5.40 she ceased firing, and the flag at her fore-truck was seen to be hauled down, though the flag at her peak continued flying. Her splendid fight was over. Out of a total company of some 800 men she had lost 600 killed in action. Her captain, when his ammunition was exhausted or could no longer be reached, ordered all survivors on deck, and told them to provide themselves with hammocks or any other articles still undestroyed which could support them in the water. Admiral Sturdee had finally signalled "Cease fire" at 5.50, and the three British ships were sweeping in at 20 knots to save life, but at six o'clock, when they were still more than 3000 yards away, the *Gneisenau* heeled over very suddenly; as she lay down on her beam ends her men were seen walking on her side. When she plunged one minute afterwards nearly all of them were rescued and 166 survived. Fourteen who died from exhaustion were buried at sea next day with full military honours.

*Gneisenau*



3. *GLASGOW AND CORNWALL V. LEIPZIG*

The moment the *Gneisenau* went down, Admiral Sturdee ordered his wireless room to call up *Glasgow*, *Kent*, and *Cornwall*, give them his news, and ask for theirs. *Glasgow* alone replied for herself and *Cornwall*. They had passed over the spot where Admiral Sturdee had finished his fight, but that was more than three hours before; they were now over seventy miles away to the south, and *Kent* again was out of sight and hearing of them. The course of the action between these three ships and the German light cruisers was as follows. When the Germans turned to escape at 1.20 P.M. they went away southward with a lead of ten or twelve miles, the *Dresden* in front with the *Nürnberg* and *Leipzig* one on each quarter. The *Glasgow* was the fastest of the pursuers, with 25 knots, and she soon drew well ahead of the other two who were doing 23 only. Captain Luce was tempted to chase the *Dresden* and leave the *Nürnberg* and *Leipzig* behind him to be dealt with by the two armoured cruisers. Unfortunately the *Dresden*, though normally a 24-knot ship, proved capable of doing 27, and was evidently not to be caught by chasing. Captain Luce therefore decided to lay himself alongside his nearest enemy, hoping to bring back the other two to her assistance. The *Leipzig* being now within 12,000 yards of him, he engaged her with his forward 6-inch gun, forcing her to turn her broadside to reply, then drawing off till he had outranged her, and she, in turn, resumed her flight. By repeating this manœuvre Captain Luce effectively delayed the *Leipzig*, and gave time for *Kent* and *Cornwall* to come up. At 3.36 *Cornwall* signalled

*Kent* to engage the *Nürnberg* who was nearest to her, and at 4.17 she herself opened fire on the *Leipzig*. It was not yet too late for the *Dresden* to intervene. Her two slower consorts were engaged in a struggle with three adversaries and were not yet beaten. Their speed would have enabled the Germans to make it a fight of three against two, and though they had no heavy guns, their new 4.1's actually outranged the *Glasgow's* older 6-inch pattern. But they had a definite order to attempt to escape, and the *Dresden* had no tradition to prevent her from interpreting it in her own favour. She disappeared into the gathering rain-mist and was not again seen until March 14, 1915, when, after an action lasting five minutes, she surrendered to *Kent* and *Glasgow*, who had caught her at anchor : she then blew up and sank.

The *Nürnberg* now turned east and went away, pursued by *Kent*. *Cornwall* came steadily up to *Leipzig* and began to hit her : it was some time before she replied, for she was closely engaged with *Glasgow*. Captain Luce now brought into play his superiority of speed : he turned completely round, ran under *Leipzig's* stern, raking her with his fresh broadside, circled round *Cornwall* and came into action again ahead of her. Both ships shepherded their enemy as they pleased till at six o'clock Captain Luce gave the order to close, and at 8000 yards *Cornwall* began to fire high-explosive shell. At 6.35 came Admiral Sturdee's message that he had sunk both the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*. It was received with loud cheering ; such good news from such a distance had never before been received during an action at sea, and here too victory was in sight. *Leipzig* was now on fire fore and aft, burning "like an oil factory."

At 7.17 *Glasgow* and *Cornwall* ceased fire and closed in. The dying *Leipzig* made no sign of surrender, and was possibly waiting to use her torpedoes. At 7.50, having given her a good half-hour's law, Captain Luce opened fire again from both ships. She then burnt green lights, and the British boats were lowered. While they were picking up the swimmers who had jumped from her, the flaming ship suddenly turned over on her port side and sank. Five of her officers and thirteen men were saved.

#### 4. *KENT* v. *NÜRNBERG*

The British squadron was now widely scattered in three different directions; and no one knew what had become of the *Kent*. She made no reply to wireless calls, and it was feared that the *Nürnberg* had disposed of her by throwing out mines as she ran away. But the *Kent* had in fact achieved a double victory. Though the lame duck of the squadron, she had beaten her enemy even in speed. Her single fight was perhaps the most exciting of the day, and her engineers had done even better than her gunlayers. The *Nürnberg's* ordinary speed was about 25 knots; *Kent's* was only  $23\frac{1}{2}$ , and she was not expected to do quite that, but the whole engine-room department was determined that she should overtake the ship that had killed the *Monmouth*. They put all their wits and all their energies into it; they heaped the fires with all kinds of woodwork—in fact they “burnt the ship to keep her going.” Hour after hour they got 25 knots out of their lame duck. At 5 P.M.—nearly four hours after parting company with the flagship—she came at last within 12,000



yards of her enemy and both ships opened fire. *Kent* received one hit and scored two, in spite of the mist and the extreme range. Two of the *Nürnberg's* boilers then burst and her speed dropped to 19 knots : she turned eight points to port and offered a broadside action. Captain Allen, confident in his gunners, closed rapidly, and placed himself before her beam at 6000 yards. By 6.10 she was on fire and had almost ceased firing. *Kent* then ran ahead of her and raked her at 3500 yards with her starboard broadside, destroying all her forward guns. Before 6.30 the *Nürnberg* was silent and motionless, down by the stern, and burning fiercely, but her flag was still flying. Captain Allen, who had ceased fire, opened again for five minutes, after which the Germans hauled down their colours, and preparations were at once made for saving them. This was a long and difficult business. All the *Kent's* boats had been destroyed or injured, and it took some time to repair the only two available. When at last a cutter and the galley were launched at 7.27 the *Nürnberg* turned over and sank. Only twelve of her men could be seen, and of these five were dead by the time they were got on board.

Commander Wharton, of the *Kent*, has given a description of the final scene which deserves to be kept in remembrance. "It was strange and weird, all this aftermath, the wind rapidly arising from the westward, darkness closing in, one ship heaving to the swell, well battered, the foretop-gallant-mast gone. Of the other nothing to be seen but floating wreckage, with here and there a man clinging, and the 'molly-hawks' (vultures of the sea) swooping by. The wind moaned, and death was in the air. Then see ! Out

of the mist loomed a great four-masted barque under full canvas. A great ghost-ship she seemed. Slowly, majestically, she sailed by and vanished in the night." The same ghost had earlier in the day looked in on the battle-cruisers' fight. Since the seaman must always have his legends it is no unintelligible belief that whenever the British Navy is in action, there will always be ghost-ships under full canvas, sailing by, and sometimes there will be commanders who can see them.

### 5. COMMENTARY

There still remain several points of interest in connection with the battle of the Falklands upon which a few words may be added. The first of these is a point of naval administration, but it concerns the historian because it relates to the historic documents which are his evidences. It is only recently that some of these evidences have become available. During four years of war the British public became reluctantly familiar with the official censorship of news. It recognised as a matter of urgent necessity that wherever information might give an advantage to the enemy it must be suppressed for a time, or perhaps even published in a deceptive form; and those who thought more deeply, or were better informed upon this question, realised further that to determine what will, and what will not, be of value to an intelligent staff is often a question of great subtlety, involving developments extremely difficult to foresee. We do not yet know how many were the cases in which such precaution was taken, but one of them was the loss of the *Audacious*, and another

the battle of the Falklands. With regard to both of these, it may be safely assumed that the need for concealment has long passed away, and this is especially fortunate in the second case, for it is desirable from every point of view that the Commander-in-Chief's original despatch on the battle of the Falklands should be preserved and made public.

It was in March 1915 that the Admiralty published what purported to be Admiral Sturdee's despatches on his victory. They were, as usual, in two parts, first the despatch proper, second the report or detailed account of the action. In the present instance the second only of these was given as actually received. It was prefaced as follows :

ADMIRALTY,  
3rd March 1915.

The following despatch has been received from Vice-Admiral Sir F. C. Doveton Sturdee, K.C.B., C.V.O., C.M.G., reporting the action off the Falkland Islands on Tuesday the 8th December 1914 :

*INVINCIBLE AT SEA,*  
10th December 1914.

SIR—I have the honour to forward a report on the action which took place on 8th December 1914 against a German squadron off the Falkland Islands.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

F. C. D. STURDEE,  
*Vice-Admiral, Commander-in-Chief.*

The Secretary,  
Admiralty.

It is evident that the German Admiralty could neither learn facts nor make inferences from a purely formal document like this. It bore no more relation to the original than one of our phantom ships to the dreadnought which it counterfeited, and it may even,



in some way known only to the Intelligence Department, have caused the enemy as much trouble and perplexity as the mystery about the fate of the *Audacious*. But history would be the poorer by the permanent suppression of the original. The ordinary citizen will read it with gratitude for its simplicity, the naval man with approval of its restraint and chivalry ; many of both kinds will feel their historical imagination fired by the use of the traditional device by which the names of the ships engaged on each side appear in the margin. This common form, originally adopted as a natural convenience, first attracted attention when the expression " have taken and sunk enemy's ships as in the margin " was supposed to be a unique example of the British officer's brevity and reserve. Admiral Sturdee made use both of the original convenience and the historic association, and thus gave distinction to a despatch which will itself form part of British naval history.

No. 23/44.

INVINCIBLE AT MONTE VIDEO,  
20th December 1914.

SIR—I have the honour to report that at 8.0 A.M. on 8th December 1914, an attack on Port Stanley, Falkland Islands, was attempted by a German Squadron consisting of two cruisers and three light cruisers accompanied by two colliers.

2. The squadron which I have the honour to command was coaling in port at the time.

3. H.M.S. *Canopus*, stationed in Port Stanley for its defence, opened fire with her 12-inch guns when the leading ships of the enemy came within sight and range over the low land. This unexpected resistance and the simultaneous observation of the tripod masts of the battle-cruisers over the land caused the enemy to turn away at speed without opening the entrance to the harbour.

*Invincible*  
*Inflexible*  
*Carnarvon*  
*Cornwall*  
*Glasgow*  
*Kent*  
*Bristol*  
*Macedonia*

*Scharnhorst*  
*Gneisenau*  
*Leipzig*  
*Nürnberg*  
 Colliers :—  
*Baden*  
*Santa Isabella*

4. The squadron weighed. A general chase ensued, followed by an action, with the result that the ships named in the margin were sunk, the *Dresden* alone escaping.

5. It gives me great satisfaction to be able to report that I was most ably assisted by Rear-Admiral Stoddart and all the Captains, who, knowing my intentions, carried them out without further orders, thus reducing signalling to a minimum.

6. The zeal and steadiness under fire of all hands during the hotly contested action was most noticeable, and has been brought to my attention by each Captain.

7. The Officers and the whole Engine-room department in every ship greatly distinguished themselves by their energy in meeting a sudden demand when, after long periods at sea, the ships of the squadron were coaling and overhauling machinery during the short time it was intended to remain in harbour.

8. Where every one did their duty according to the highest traditions of the Naval Service, it is not easy to individualise, but I attach a list of Officers and Men who showed merit.

9. I deeply regret the needless sacrifice of so many lives by an enemy who displayed such bravery, skill, and endurance ; after the ships were defeated and sinking, and in no position to make any further defence, they did not surrender. Notwithstanding this, every practicable effort was made to save life.

The *Scharnhorst*, with the admiral and all hands, sank in the middle of the engagement.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

F. C. D. STURDEE,  
*Vice-Admiral, Commander-in-Chief.*

The Secretary,  
 Admiralty.

A second point for reflection arises not unnaturally out of the first. Admiral Sturdee's despatch was what is called in the Navy "a gentleman's despatch," that is to say, it speaks with chivalry of his enemies,

with generosity of his officers, and with modesty of his achievement. These qualities are peculiarly fitting to the report of a really great victory. Some writers have represented the battle of the Falklands, quite ingenuously, as a small and unimportant affair, others as the mechanical triumph of a strong force over one greatly weaker in material. These views can only be derived from an ignorance of human history and of the facts of the case. The importance of a battle cannot be entirely measured by the numbers of the forces engaged. An action between two great fleets in which one lost four cruisers and the other none might well be a drawn battle or a victory for the side which suffered most : it might also be wholly without effect on the course of the war. But a fight, and especially a sea fight, may have echoes, and the echoes may prove more powerful than the guns which awoke them. Coronel was a small affair from the point of view of material, and even our losses were but an infinitesimal diminution of our strength. But they were the first losses for a hundred years inflicted on a British squadron in fair fight, and their imponderable effect began at once to weigh in the balance of neutral opinion. That balance was redressed by the battle of the Falklands in the most overwhelming and final manner possible. The victory was one of the rarest and most impressive kind ; it was not a defeat of the enemy, it was his annihilation. In this respect it is paralleled by no other action of the present war, and by only two or three in the history of the British Navy. It is an axiom of diplomatists that "the stricken field," the accomplished fact of war, has a peculiar value in negotiation : similarly a victory like that of the Falklands, spectacular,



memorable, a perfect example of power, must have an effect far beyond the direct advantage of the moment. It not only wiped out all memory of Coronel from the world's consciousness, it established anew the world's valuation of the British Navy. Only when this result is recognised is it possible to appreciate fully the service which Admiral Sturdee and his command rendered to their country.

It is true that they enjoyed good fortune, but what will be longer and more clearly remembered is the perfection of the skill and spirit with which they did their work. We have already noted the fine performance of the engineers, especially of those who transformed the *Kent* from an old ship to a new one in the moment of crisis. The coolness and marksmanship of the fire control and gunners may be judged by the figures. The accuracy of their fire was immensely greater than that of their enemy—much greater even when allowance is made for the nerve-shattering effect of the larger shells. The *Gneisenau* is stated by her survivors to have been hit more than fifty times. The *Scharnhorst* succumbed more quickly to a still heavier storm of fire. These two ships concentrated their fire mainly upon the *Invincible*, yet they only hit her eighteen times, and she had no casualties at all. The *Inflexible* they hit three times and killed one of her men. The *Gneisenau* we know fired 600 shots. If her consort did the same, they made 21 hits in the 1200.

The three smaller cruisers, when we consider the age and inferior range of their guns, did even better. *Cornwall* and *Glasgow* were of course an over-match for the *Leipzig*, but only because, while she could outrange them, they outmanœuvred her. Before

they annihilated her she had fired away all her ammunition, but had only hit *Cornwall* eighteen times and *Glasgow* hardly at all. Only one man was killed and four wounded in the two ships. The most interesting gunnery action of the day was that between *Kent* and *Nürnberg*. The former had an advantage in weight of metal, the latter in range. The *Kent* was hit by some twenty of the six hundred shots fired at her; she had her funnels pierced, her wireless mast shot away, and four men killed and twelve wounded—most of them by a single shell. On the other hand she fired 437 shots at the *Nürnberg* and hit her continually, silencing her guns and sinking the ship outright in an hour and a half's fighting. These figures need no comment. It is true that our men, at the Falklands as in other actions, speak admiringly of the "deadly accuracy" and "magnificent shooting" of the enemy, but it is clear that the words would be still more fitly applied to their own performance.

A critic in the Service would be better able than a landsman, but perhaps less likely, to dilate upon the conduct of the action. The historian need not deal with professional minutiae. He may be content to remark that in this battle the opportunities were seized and the difficulties surmounted with a skill which left nothing unachieved. Only an accident or a more heroic resolution on her part could have brought the *Dresden* within Admiral Sturdee's reach. All that was possible he accomplished, including the remarkable feat of returning his ships almost intact and in the minimum of time.

The historian's last reflection will perhaps be a comparison between the decisions of Cradock at Coronel and of Spee at the Falklands. It is not

certain that either of these two commanders made a mistake of judgement. It is certain that neither of them was capable of a default in courage. We have reason to believe that the action of both was determined by their orders and by the tradition of their respective services. In each case the commander of the beaten force knew his inferiority from the first. In each case, too, the inferiority was one of speed as well as of gun-power, so that there was the less temptation to run for safety. It is perhaps just possible that Cradock might have got away more or less battered if he had turned tail at once and trusted to the rapid fall of night. Spee, in his place, would almost certainly have tried that course. When his turn came he did try it, and whether by his own policy or by that of his own navy, he lost the chance of doing a last piece of effective service to his country. His guns at their own range were powerful ; his ships were much better armoured than the battle-cruisers ; he had surprised his enemy while coaling, and had therefore an immense advantage of position. If, instead of flying, he had rapidly closed and overpowered the British guardships he might have inflicted serious, if not disastrous, damage upon the rest of the squadron as they came out one by one. It is more than probable that his larger ships at any rate would have paid the penalty ; but even if he had suffered the complete annihilation which he actually found in flight, he would have struck a double blow for his country. He would have deprived his enemy of half the fruits of victory, and he would have founded a tradition which might have fortified his Service in defeat.



## CHAPTER VI

### GERMAN SUBMARINE WAR

#### 1. THE PROBLEM OF THE U-BOAT BLOCKADE

IT was not difficult, during the war, to write of the German submarine campaign. Looking at it from the outside, as we were compelled to do, we could only regard it as a hideous crime committed wilfully and by a whole people against law and humanity. Our anger was justified ; but it was mainly instinctive. Our perception was clear enough ; but it was mainly perception of the two practical points, that the attack was dangerous, and that it was characteristic—it marked a true line of cleavage between the German theory of war and the code hitherto followed by the civilised nations. Looking back, we could trace the dogmatic origins of the German theory among professors and philosophers ; and we could find historical records which would go some way to account for a brutality of practice very unusual in war. For immediate purposes that was enough—we recognised the danger, saw that it threatened not only our material interests, but the moral future of the world, and turned our pain into a stern resolution to rid humanity of the fear of it now and for ever.

In all this we were right : but the position is now changed, and the real problem lies before us, a problem

far more difficult of solution. The immediate purpose is accomplished ; the danger of the submarine has disappeared ; but the German people remains, to inhabit if possible the same world with us, to be reconciled by us to the loss of all their hopes, and to the victory of our ideals. This is the necessary corollary of our success in arms and the only real guarantee against an attempted reversal of it. We have convinced our enemies that they were weaker than ourselves, we must go on to convince them that they were also further from the purpose of life. To do this we have first to understand what has happened, and, secondly, to state it so that it shall be possible for them and all the world to understand it too. No more difficult task can be imagined, for though the time for mere anger is now gone, the facts must be described, and they are terrible facts. We can only proceed at all by keeping the imagination upon a cool and remote elevation, from which acts of violence, even crimes, can be seen as historical events, distant and no longer exasperating.

To understand fully is perhaps not possible ; but we may achieve something if we consider the German action as the resultant of a number of interacting forces : first, a particular strain of the national character, inherited and distinctly traceable for centuries ; second, a tendency to revert to a primitive type of religious feeling ; third, a docility and an emotional instability which made it easy for those in authority to rouse strong feeling by suggestion ; fourth, the propagation of a Machiavellian theory of the State by professorial and military writers ; fifth, the urgency of the situation created by the policy of the Naval Chiefs ; and sixth, the super-added

urgency of the general military position after the breakdown of the German war plan.

Of these forces the first has long been known to us, but its outbreaks had been repeatedly forgiven and forgotten. In the intervals of peace Europe has been ready to assume the existence among all civilised peoples of a common standard of merciful and law-abiding conduct in war. We ourselves, at any rate, have been almost too forgetful in this matter. It has long been a recognised characteristic of the British stock all over the world to regard a stout opponent with generous admiration, even with a feeling of fellowship, and to deal kindly with him when disabled or defeated; and we have always credited others with the same feeling. But we have from time to time discovered and rediscovered that this chivalry of feeling and conduct is not commonly shared by the greater part of the Germanic race. Widespread as it now is among us, it is a spiritual inheritance, and derived not from our Teutonic but from our Scandinavian ancestors, or from our conquest by French civilisation. It has never been displayed by the Germans in war, and this has been repeatedly noted both by their opponents and their allies. Froissart remarked, five and a half centuries ago, on the difference between the French and English knights, who played their limited game of war with honour and courtesy, and the Germans, who showed neither of those qualities. A century later it is recorded of Bayard—"le chevalier sans peur et sans reproche"—that whenever he was serving in an army with a German contingent, he was careful to stay in billets till they had marched out, because of their habit of burning, when they left, the houses where they had



found hospitality. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries German barbarity was unbounded: the Thirty Years' War was the lasting shame of Europe, and the sack of Magdeburg a final example of the triumph of the wild swine in man. In the eighteenth century Prussia found herself, and produced the typical Prussian army—a body of troops recruited by force, trained by a rigid and cruel discipline, and intended for use as a political weapon. Their King and War Lord, Frederick William, had a violent and childish passion for collecting soldiers of gigantic stature. Our men encountered, and defeated, the same belief in size and parade, when the seven-foot giants of the Prussian Guard failed to hold Nonneboschen Wood against the Oxford Light Infantry. In the Napoleonic Wars the cruelty of his German allies was severely commented upon by the Iron Duke, who had commanded many ruffians and seen some appalling days of horror. He makes no comparisons, he simply condemns brutality wherever he finds it: we may be content to do the same. To be fair to the Germans, we must bring into account the storm of Badajoz; to be fair to ourselves, we must at the same time remember that acts which we as a nation have for a century condemned and put behind us, the Germans have continued in practice, and, what is more significant still, have adopted and organised as a method of war at the discretion of the Higher Command. Baron Friedrich von Hügel, an impartial writer, adds that brutality is also for them an approved method of government: “Not a decade ago, at a centenary celebration connected with the town and University of Heidelberg, one of the scenes enacted, which symbolised German Colonial rule, began with German

Colonial officials in tropical costumes bastinadoing their native subjects, and ended with these same officials stringing up on trees these same coloured men." And if any one doubts, or wishes to doubt, the truth about this inherited and unrepressed element in the German character, let him look through the criminal statistics of the German Government for the ten years preceding the war, and read the book of Professor Aschaffenburg, the chief criminologist of Germany, published in 1913. He will there find it stated and proved that the most violent and abominable forms of crime were then prevalent in Germany, to a degree beyond all our experience—beyond even our imagination of what was possible in a European community: and the honest and patriotic writer noted two facts as especially appalling: one, that the worst kinds of crime are far from being adequately represented by the figures, because of the "open, universally known, and universally disregarded mockery of the law"; the other that "the statistics show a tremendous flood of socially dangerous persons . . . which in the case of juveniles, the hope of our future, is progressing unceasingly." This was written in 1912-13: in 1914-18 these very juveniles formed the great mass of the German Army and Navy. The violent and cruel strain in the national character had not only not been eliminated or discouraged, it had developed to an almost uncontrollable force.

Its manifestations were not only physical: whether from a strongly heathen inheritance, or as some German observers think, from the demoralising spread of materialism, there appeared in Germany immediately upon the outbreak of war an answering outburst of primitive and excited religious feeling.

Christianity and its doctrines were spoken of with contempt. "Once there was a God who listened more to the sobs of the downtrodden than to the words of Kings. But to-day there is another God, and He, wearing the Death's Head cap of the German Hussars, and carrying a white banner, storms side by side with the Kaiser at the head of the German troops." Another poet adds: "Yes! and we will tell you who He is. The God who speaks out of our cannons, the God who breaks up your fortresses, who rushes through the seas on our ships, who whizzes across the heavens with our flying-men; the God of our swords, before which you tremble, is the same almighty Spirit that has moved over Germany for thousands of years. He was Wotan, the cloud-wanderer of our fathers: it was He who suffered with us but who remained alive, . . . the God who lay beside Frederick in the field and at last gave us a new day." Poets do not always represent the majority of their countrymen, but the evidence here is not all poetical: and it is supplemented by the failure of the Churches in Germany to mitigate the new heathenism. The Protestant element admired and copied the more brutal side of Luther's character with his counsel of "pecca fortiter"; and Baron Friedrich von Hügel, himself a member of the Roman Church, pronounces it to be "beyond question that . . . the bulk of the Roman Catholics of Germany, although, according to German standards, independent enough in municipal and home-political affairs, accepted and even helped on the Chauvinist temper, megalomania, and 'realism,' so prominent in their Government's dealings with other countries."

Of the unparalleled susceptibility of the German



people to influence from official or authoritative sources it is hardly necessary to speak : even before the war the instances were innumerable and known to all. But we had perhaps hardly realised—in spite of the Ems telegram—how deliberately and with what tremendous effectiveness this susceptibility would be played upon in time of war. We know now that the Kaiser, his Ministers, his Generals, and his Admirals all relied upon it with absolute confidence. The secret Note, dated Berlin, March 19, 1913, and exposed by the French Foreign Office in 1914, included this recommendation : “ The idea that our armaments are a reply to the armaments and policy of the French must be instilled into the people. The people must be accustomed to think that an offensive war on our part is a necessity if we are to combat the adversary’s provocations.” The truth, that the position was exactly the reverse—that the French Army Law was a desperate reply to the German—was a simple matter of fact, and known to the whole of Europe ; but the effect of this flagrant falsehood upon the German mind was absolutely to be reckoned upon. Similarly the U-boat campaign of 1915 was proclaimed by the German Government, and is still spoken of by Grand-Admiral von Tirpitz as the justifiable reply to the English blockade, which in reality was commenced later and in consequence of the German decision. Similarly the invasion of neutral territory, the use of poison gas, and the bombing of undefended towns were all charged against the French and English untruly and in order to justify German acts in advance. The attitude of the German official cannot be better exemplified than by the following words from a Report by Colonel Renner, German Military Attaché at the

Hague, sent to Berlin in January 1917. "It would be wholly wrong to look upon the English supplementary Note as merely 'truly English' hypocrisy. I quite understand if, for propaganda purposes, one expresses oneself differently, but as a matter of fact there can be no doubt that the Note represents the honest conviction of those peoples who are fighting against us, and that their conviction is shared by a great part of the neutral world." This is written by a clear-sighted and courageous man, and we need not criticise his view of what is legitimate in propaganda. The point for us here is that he thought a truth which was quite obvious to him and to the greater part of the world could be successfully combated, so far as its effect on his countrymen was concerned, by an accusation of "hypocrisy." The same belief in the German susceptibility to suggestion is shown in Hindenburg's long exhortation to the Army and people, issued on September 2, 1918. He is full of alarm lest the faint-hearted should be "intimidated" by enemy leaflets telling them that "Your fight is hopeless. Your submarines are of no use. We construct more ships than you sink. You shall never see your colonies again." He ends by regretting that the Government has tolerated thus far the reproduction of enemy army communiqués and speeches of statesmen. "This is strength, because it shows that we know our strength. But it is also weakness because it permits the enemy's poison to enter our midst." Here again we have a sincere opinion: the remarkable thing is that it does not occur to the Commander-in-Chief to rely on truth as an answer to the enemy's statements—he believes them to be false, but feels that they will be none the less deadly in their effect. We have all learned in this

war the importance of opinion, and the effect of "propaganda" upon it, but only the Germans have shown this unlimited belief in words: only a German Kaiser or a German Admiral could have thought it worth while to tell his own people that Jutland was a victory for the side which was put out of action.

But the most remarkable instance of this docility of the German people is to be found in their acceptance of the theory of the State as proclaimed by a line of professors and military writers—Fichte, Naumann, Meyer, Treitschke, Bernhardi, and others—an acceptance which has led to some curiously inhuman speculations among their more intellectual men and still more curiously inhuman outbursts among their men of action. The theory as we know it is the doctrine of Professor Treitschke: that the noble State is essentially distinguished by its assertion of power through war. Power is the sole end of such a State in its dealings with other States. To feel, or to show, consideration for the rights or aspirations of other States would be *pro tanto* a renunciation of power, and therefore a sin—"the sin against the Holy Spirit." For "self-sacrifice in behalf of a foreign State is not only not moral, but it contradicts the idea of self-preservation, which is the highest thing for the State." In this self-preservation the State must not be hampered by any scruples or obligations. "If States conclude treaties with one another, their completeness as Powers is to some extent restricted." Treaties may be made, but they are always made, by German-thinking peoples, "with the stipulation *rebus sic stantibus*." A State cannot possibly bind its will for the future in respect to another State. "The State has no higher judge above it, and will therefore



conclude all its treaties with that silent reservation." The credit for all this is given to Machiavelli, who was the first to declare the fundamental truth that "the State is Power," and the fundamental moral principle that "what is good for the pursuit of power is proper and necessary."

In one respect only does Treitschke attempt to improve on the philosophy of Machiavelli: he adds to it a moral sanction. The pursuit of power by all possible means is justified by the use of power "for the highest moral good of mankind." This for Germany is no vague formula: it has a precise interpretation. The highest moral good of mankind is the spread of German culture. As no other State is likely to further this, it is obvious that no other State can be justified in seeking power, or indeed in existing at all, except as a subordinate part of that group of inter-allied Culture-States which is the German Empire. Small nations are, as Sombart and Bernhardi said, "only a bad joke"—"ludicrous and pernicious." As for the larger ones, the English are democratic and unsystematic: the "Neo-Latins" are worse still. Fichte is remembered as having said a hundred years ago that the Germans are without native words possessing the same connotation as "the three infamous neo-Latin words 'humanity,' 'popularity,' 'liberality'"—because Germans are too original and sincere. Nor have they a word for "character," because "to possess character and to be German are, without doubt, synonymous." So with nationality: "only the German truly possesses a people of his own; only he is capable of specific rational love for his nation." In short, when you speak of "the State" you must mean the German

State ; for “ the German people is *the* people ; the Germans stand to all the West European peoples and civilisations of non-Teutonic speech, as does the true, the genuine, and the intrinsically precious to the false, the insincere, and only contingently useful.” This is Baron von Hügel’s summing up, and he gives as a striking result of such theorising the prevalence of “ strange misapprehensions concerning large facts of the war. Thus, the wickedness of the attempt to starve out an entire people is dwelt on—although blockade is recognised as legitimate by International Law, and though Germany, had she but possessed the power, would have been the first to introduce it against us with incomparably greater stringency.” A few months after these words were written Germany did, as we shall see, attempt a new and unparalleled blockade against us, in defiance of International Law, and it is thus defended by Grand-Admiral von Tirpitz in his book. “ When England unscrupulously outraged all the fundamental principles of the old maritime law by declaring a blockade . . . and when America practically adopted this proceeding as maritime law, ‘ adapted to the conditions of modern warfare and commerce,’ then without doubt we acquired the formal right to adopt a policy of *quid pro quo*. This the submarines enabled us to do.” Again, when two Spanish ships were sunk by a U-boat and the Spanish Government protested against such treatment, the Grand-Admiral’s comment is : “ They always complain of us, but England can do anything.” England had of course never sunk a neutral, or threatened or claimed to do so ; but for her to stop contraband going to Germany was a far more infamous act than for Germany to drown neutrals,

because England was only England and Germany was Germany. Such unreason from the Grand-Admiral, with his naïve tone and likeable personality, is only amusing—so long as we can forget the seventeen thousand non-combatants slain at sea. But the same inheritance from Fichte and Treitschke is seen in the less restrained gesture of Major-General von Ditfurth. “We owe no explanations to any one (for the destruction of Rheims and Louvain): there is nothing for us to justify and nothing for us to explain away. Every act of whatever nature committed by our troops for the purpose of discouraging, defeating, and destroying our enemies is a brave act, a good deed, and is fully justified. There is no reason whatever why we should trouble ourselves about the notions concerning us in other countries. Certainly we should not worry about the opinions and feelings held in the neutral countries. Germany stands supreme—the arbiter of her own methods, which must in time of war be dictated to the world.”

Probably the most powerful among the apostles to the Germans—the apostles of the new Gospel—is General von Bernhardt: he is inferior to Treitschke as a writer and thinker, but more widely popular, and better known outside his own country. He expressly repudiates Christian feeling in international politics. Christian morality is based on the law of love: “Love God above all things, and thy neighbour as thyself.” But this law, he says, “can claim no significance for the relations of one country to another. Christian morality is personal and social, and in its nature cannot be political.” This clears the ground for the pursuit of German power by German methods. The positive sanction is a double one. First, the



main function of human existence is war: true culture can only arise from the will-to-power and the will-to-fight, and German culture alone is of this nature. Secondly, no other nation has such a capacity as the German for generalisation and absorption: this "fits us for leadership in the intellectual world, and imposes on us the obligation to maintain that position"—by force or any other means. "The dominion of German thought can only be extended under the aegis of political power, and unless we act in conformity with this idea, we shall be untrue to our great duties towards the human race."

Lastly, there is a very different writer, the religious philosopher, Friedrich Naumann: "deeply wistful over his own divided unbridged soul—half Christian, half Pagan; half love, half violence." His *Letters on Religion* are crude and illogical, but they are bold and sincere, and suggest the true conclusion even while they adopt the false one. To us, that is, not to the German: for him the conclusive passages only are acceptable—those which state that "militarism is the foundation of all order in the State, and of all prosperity in the society of Europe," and present illustrations like the following: "How am I to say that Bismarck's preparations for the Schleswig-Holstein War were a service in the Kingdom of Jesus Christ? I cannot manage to do so. Yet, all the same, I admire these preparations: it does not occur to me to lament them. Not every doing of one's duty is Christian. Bismarck did his duty, for his avocation was the cultivation of power. But such a duty and its fulfilment are not directly an imitation of Christ." This may be the weakest and most fallacy-haunted passage in the book, but it is easy to

see with how irresistible a power it must have drawn all the sympathies of its German readers. It is here that we must make our utmost effort to understand, here that we must subdue feeling and look at ideas as facts. Strange as it seems to us, word-spun theories and arbitrarily stated dogmas did play a great part in training the German nation for a war which in the eyes of mankind at large was a long series of crimes deliberately willed and vehemently carried out.

And now that we have briefly taken note of the four main influences which went to create the German mind of the year 1914, we are ready to look at the events of the four following years, and mark in the submarine campaign the working of these inherited feelings and inspired ideas when the moment of action came. Looking at the conduct of the war, and especially at the conduct of the U-boat campaign, as coolly and scientifically as possible, we shall still find it impracticable to separate the purely military or professional from the moral aspect. We can put away all thoughts of anger, revenge, or punishment: but in this plain conflict between two philosophies History can teach us nothing if it does not teach that one is superior to the other. Morality is seen to have conquered militarism: this must either be a progress or a relapse in the course of international relations. The case, too, is a clear-cut one; each side has been consistent and thorough in the following out of the principles it represents. The Germans have exhibited unmistakably the effect both of their breed and their education. Technically, they were making use of a new weapon which it was difficult to use effectively under the existing rules. They

quickly determined to do what was "proper and necessary," that is "what is good for the pursuit of power." But they had a choice even here: and they chose in accordance with the maxim that "Germany stands supreme—the arbiter of her own methods." They decided, not to improve or adapt the weapon, but to abandon the rules. For this they were condemned by the only powerful neutral opinion remaining in the world. But this failed to give them pause: they not only broke the law, they broke it in German fashion. Their lawlessness, if skilfully carried out with the natural desire to avoid unnecessary suffering, might have been reduced to an almost technical breach, involving little or no loss of life. But for reasons of policy, they chose instead to exhibit to a hostile world the spectacle of a whole Service practising under deliberate orders what was universally held to be murder: and, moreover, adding, partly from policy and partly from temperament, strokes of personal cruelty hitherto known only among madmen or merciless barbarians. Finally—and this concerns their future position in the world even more nearly—the German people at home, a nation claiming with supreme assurance a great pre-eminence in all virtue, moral and intellectual, accepted readily every order of their ruling caste and applauded every act of their fellows in the battle, however abhorrent to what the rest of mankind hold to be sane human feeling. For all this we need make no accusation of our own: we have only to set out the facts, and the words with which the German people and their teachers received them and rejoiced in them. Where, either at the time or afterwards, any sign was shown of a division of opinion, or of individual hesitation, we shall record



it ; but such signs have been in fact so few as not to impair the consistency of the German nation.

## 2. THE CAMPAIGN OF 1915

It was towards the end of 1914 that the German Admiralty conceived the idea of blockading the British Isles by means of a submarine fleet. There were, at that moment especially, great difficulties in the way. The number of boats available was very small—at the outbreak of war Germany had only 27 built and 12 building. Further, for the pursuit and capture of commerce, a submarine is not nearly so well fitted as an ordinary cruiser ; in fact, the U-boat of that period was not fitted at all for such work. To hold up and examine a ship on the surface is too dangerous a venture for a frail boat with a very small crew : to put a prize crew on board, and send the captured vessel into port, is generally impossible. As an exception, and in case of extreme necessity, it has always been recognised that a prize may be sunk if the crew and passengers are safely provided for ; but this proviso, too, is impossible for a submarine of ordinary size to fulfil. Besides these technical difficulties, there was also the danger of fatally offending neutral Powers, especially if their ships were to be sunk without proof that they were carrying contraband of war.

Nevertheless, such was the urgency of the position, that it was decided to defy all these risks and difficulties. "The first considerations," says Admiral Scheer, "were, of course, those concerning Maritime Law." These were easily settled. On August 20, 1914, the British Government, which had never

ratified the Declaration of London prepared in 1909, announced that it had decided to accept that Declaration in many respects, but with certain changes and additions which it considered necessary. To Admiral Scheer it appears unlawful for any party to an agreement never concluded to adopt voluntarily upon a subsequent occasion part of the terms of that agreement while expressly refusing others. "The Englishman considers himself bound by law only in so far as it does not hinder his operations." But there is no denying that in an English, an International, or even a German court, the words "bound by law" would here be disallowed: an agreement proposed but not ratified cannot be binding, and cannot be spoken of as "law." Yet Admiral Scheer uses this alleged breach of law to justify "retaliatory measures" by means of the submarine. And then, in a moment of vexation with his own people, he abandons his case, representing not the German, but the British action as the retaliatory one. "Protests in law were foredoomed to defeat owing to this *brutal policy of might*: but unfortunately this was the form our own policy had taken."

The second consideration was that of the right to use the submarine in the proposed manner. This is argued as follows: "The submarine was a weapon of war adopted by every State. This gave us the right to make use of it in the manner to which, owing to its peculiar nature, it was best adapted. Any use of it which did not take this peculiar nature into account would be nonsensical and unmilitary. . . . If it sank merchant vessels, including their crews and any passengers, the blame would attach to those who despised our warnings, and open-eyed ran the risk of

being torpedoed, in exactly the same way as the crews of those steamers that would not submit to English dictation, and in spite of English warnings, took the risk of crossing the areas where mines were laid."

The third consideration was not a legal, but a practical one. "It was imperative to make the most of the advantages arising from the submersibility of the boat, otherwise the weapon would be blunted at the start and bound to be ineffectual. . . . That was the consideration on which the conclusion was based, that as the loss of ships increased, trade with the British Isles must ultimately cease. . . . All these considerations had led to the same suggestion from the most varied sections of the Navy—that our conduct of naval warfare must follow the example given by England, and be directed towards the destruction of commercial traffic, because in that way we can hit England in a vital spot. The U-boat will serve as a suitable weapon for this purpose."

Such is the argument of Germany's ablest Admiral, and it deserves close attention. It satisfied the German public and was constantly adopted by them, both in the Press and in private letters. It therefore helps us to understand what was incomprehensible to us during the war—helps us not to accept the conclusion to which they came, but to trace the steps by which they approached it. It is clear that those steps were illogical—Admiral Scheer's sentences bristle with fallacies which he cannot perceive—but we can now see that the matter was presented under the form of logic. The position is therefore at this stage one of a very human kind: the reasoning faculty is hustled and confused, not by mere passion, but by the pressure of a danger that was too close and too



terrible to allow play to any motive but that of mere self-preservation. This, it must be remembered, was November 1914: the battle of Ypres had just ended fatally. "Enemies on all sides!" cries Scheer. "That was the situation. Could the war on land alone rescue us from the position, or war at sea as carried on heretofore?" German naval opinion had neglected the submarine and its power against commerce. "It is no reproach to anybody not to have foreseen this. On the contrary, such aggressive ideas were quite foreign to our naval policy." This is very near the truth: before the war, as we have already noted, the German Admiralty had a building policy, but no fighting policy. The High Sea Fleet was designed to keep England out of the war, not to meet her at sea. The designer of it had more audacious views; but he has made it known that they received no support either from the Kaiser or the Chief of the Staff. When the hope of taking Paris had been lost at the Marne, and the hope of rushing the Channel ports at the first battle of Ypres, when the control of the North Sea had been given up, and the outer seas were being swept clear by British cruisers, any kind of active policy seemed better than none. The Grand-Admiral raged against the fools who thought to defeat England before the walls of Paris—he knew the meaning of sea power as well as any commander in this war—but since he could not go his own way and fight for world might or downfall on open water, he was driven to take the only alternative that was offered him, an alternative involving a special and formidable danger of its own. It was just before Christmas of 1914 that he put the question: "What would America say if Germany should declare

a submarine war against all enemy trading vessels ? ” and on February 4, 1915, a formal proclamation followed from Berlin. This announced that the waters round Great Britain and Ireland were held to be a war-region, and that from February 18 “ every enemy merchant vessel found in this region will be destroyed, without its always being possible to warn the crews or passengers of the dangers threatening.”

No civilised Power had ever before threatened to kill non-combatants in this fashion : but this was not all. The seamen of nations not at war at all were to take their chance of death on the same footing. “ Neutral ships will also incur danger in the war-region, where, in view of the misuse of neutral flags ordered by the British Government, and incidents inevitable in sea-warfare, attacks intended for hostile ships may affect neutral ships also.” No “ misuse of neutral flags ” has ever been ordered by our Government. The destruction of a merchant vessel or liner without warning or search is not an incident “ inevitable in sea-warfare ” ; it is an incident always avoided in any sea-warfare hitherto known among civilised nations.

A fortnight later the sinkings began, and on March 9 three ships were torpedoed, without warning, in one day. In the case of one of these, the *Tangistan*, 37 were killed or drowned out of the 38 on board. On March 15 the stewardess and 5 men of the *Fingal* were drowned. On the 27th the crew of the *Aquila* were fired upon while launching their boats : 3 were killed and several were wounded. On the 28th the Elder Dempster liner *Falaba*, from Liverpool to South Africa, was stopped and torpedoed in cold blood. As the crew and passengers sank, the

Germans looked on from the deck of the U-boat, laughing and jeering at their struggling victims, of whom 111 perished. "The sinking of the *Falaba*," said the *New York Times*, "is perhaps the most shocking crime of the war." Whatever it was, it was neither unintentional nor long unparalleled. In April the German Embassy at Washington publicly advertised that vessels flying the flag of Great Britain or her Allies were liable to destruction, and that travellers sailing in them would do so at their own risk. Intending travellers smiled at this threat and went on booking their passages to Europe. Even when those about to sail in the huge liner *Lusitania* received anonymous telegrams warning them that the ship would be sunk, no one believed that the Government of a great Power could seriously intend such an act, or that the Government of an equally great neutral Power would accept such an injury without an immediate declaration of war. Not a single berth was countermanded, and on May 1 the *Lusitania* sailed from New York, carrying, besides her crew of 651, no less than 1255 passengers.

On the morning of Friday, May 7, she made her landfall on the Irish coast. The sea was dangerously calm; but Captain Turner, wishing "to reach the bar at Liverpool at a time when he could proceed up the river without stopping to pick up a pilot," reduced speed to 18 knots, holding on the ordinary course. At 2 P.M. the *Lusitania* passed the Old Head of Kinsale; at 2.15 she was torpedoed without warning, and without a submarine having been sighted by any one on board. Her main steam-pipe was cut, and her engines could not be stopped; she listed heavily to starboard, and while she was under



way it was very difficult to launch the boats. At 2.36 she went down, and of the 1906 souls on board 1134 went down with her, only 772 being saved in the boats which got clear.

This was not a first example of the new method, but it was a test case, for the injury done was on the largest possible scale and challenged the only neutral Power which could afford to dispute the issue. By the code and the feeling of the Western nations the act was for the German Government and the German Navy an unparalleled disgrace. The civilised world, moved almost more to horror than to anger, paused in expectation of some sign of repentance, for the German nation had still the chance of repudiating the cold theory of their rulers. But the signs were all in an opposite direction. We know now that there were dissentients, both moralists and politicians: some Socialists in particular were troubled, and denounced the subserviency of their fellows. But the nation as a whole exhibited neither remorse nor even shame. Their attitude was due no doubt partly to their thorough acceptance of the official theories of war, but it displayed also a special gesture, an outbreak of feeling, which was evidently spontaneous and had a much deeper source. Upon this it would be interesting to hear the opinion of Professor Aschaffenburg, for the visible facts would appear to be most naturally accounted for by the inherited and long-developed character of the nation, and to differ only in scale and not in kind from the countless murders and brutalities which had troubled the criminologists before the war. In any case, it must be recorded that the German people not only approved but acclaimed their leaders: they adopted the sink-

ing of the *Lusitania* as their own act, and celebrated it with fierce and universal joy. "The news," said the well-known *Kölnische Zeitung*, "will be received by the German people with unanimous satisfaction, since it proves to England and the whole world that Germany is quite in earnest in regard to her submarine warfare." The *Kölnische Volkszeitung*, a prominent Roman Catholic and patriotic paper, was even more delighted. "With joyful pride we contemplate this latest deed of our Navy, and it will not be the last." The two words "joyful" and "pride" are here decisive; they mark off the community which they represent from the rest of our society. Only this one nation could be joyful over the horrible death of a thousand women, children, and non-combatants; only this one nation could feel pride in the act, for it was in no way a difficult or dangerous feat. But an exultation over "power" and "will," which would elsewhere be considered half-witted wickedness, is clearly recognised in Germany as enthusiasm for the national ideals. In the midst of the general exultation, when medals were being struck, holidays given to school children, and subscriptions got up for the "heroic" crew of the U-boat, Pastor Baumgarten preached on the "Sermon on the Mount," and gave his estimate of the German character in these words: "Whoever cannot prevail upon himself to approve from the bottom of his heart the sinking of the *Lusitania*—whoever cannot conquer his sense of the gigantic cruelty to countless perfectly innocent victims, and give himself up to honest delight at this victorious exploit of German defensive power—him we judge to be no true German."

"It will not be the last." The threat was soon

made good. On August 19 of the same year the White Star liner *Arabic*, one day out from Liverpool, was 60 miles from the Irish coast when she sighted the s.s. *Dunsley* in a sinking condition. She naturally steered towards her ; but as she approached a submarine suddenly appeared from behind the *Dunsley*, and torpedoed the *Arabic* without a moment's warning. Boats were got out, but the ship sank in eight minutes and 30 lives were lost out of 424.

In both these cases a nervous symptom was observable. The Germans, feeling that their joy and pride were not exciting the sympathy of neutral nations, tried to justify themselves after the first triumphant outburst by asserting that the liners had been carrying munitions of war, and by the further statement, in the case of the *Lusitania*, that the ship was struck by only one torpedo and would not have sunk but for the detonation of a quantity of explosives among her cargo. These excuses were suggested by authority : they were accepted and repeated by Germans everywhere, though a moment's thought would have shown how ill-founded they must be and how inconsistent with the action of the German Government. The threats against the *Lusitania* forbade her, not to carry contraband, but to enter the war zone under any conditions : if evidence had been procurable that she had explosives on board, it would naturally have been put forward in the warning to passengers. Even those in Europe and America who sincerely believed that there had been in fact a small consignment of ammunition in the ship, could not maintain that a Government was justified in condemning to death a thousand women, children, and non-combatants for a concealment of cargo of which



it had refrained from informing them. The question was finally laid to rest by an inquiry held in the Federal District Court of New York. Judge Julius Meyer there found that the *Lusitania* did not in fact carry explosives, and added: "The evidence presented has disposed, without question and for all time, of any false claims brought forward to justify this inexpressibly cowardly attack on an unarmed passenger steamer." The factitious nature of the excuse and the docility of the German public is even more strikingly shown in the case of the *Arabic*, for that ship was bound from England to America when she was attacked and sunk. A people who could be persuaded that we were exporting ammunition to America in 1915 could be persuaded of anything.

The year closed with the torpedoing, again without warning, on December 30, of the P. & O. liner *Persia*, from London to Bombay. She sank in five minutes, and out of a total of 501 on board, 335 were lost with her. Four of her boats were picked up after having been thirty hours at sea. This success had a less exhilarating effect than the two previous ones: the German people were becoming more and more aware of their unpopularity. As Admiral Scheer remarks, "We looked in vain for sympathy from the neutrals." America was "demanding for her citizens the right to travel anywhere by sea unmolested. . . . Such a peremptory tone was not employed towards England." This is the complaint that we have already noted as coming from Grand-Admiral von Tirpitz: it is apparently characteristic of the German naval mind to see no difference between stopping a neutral ship for examination and sending it to the bottom, crew and all, without warning; and

no reason why if England does the one, Germany should not do the other. Admiral Scheer was depressed by the weakness shown in this controversy by the "politicians" of Germany; he declares that the U-boat campaign was "hampered by an order not to sink any big passenger steamers, not even those of the enemy." The *Arabic*, he says, was sunk, not in defiance of this order, but "in justifiable self-defence against a threatened attack." The position was, however, considered too serious to be met by such an argument, and when the answer to the American objections was discussed, the Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Bachmann, was not allowed to express his views. He resigned accordingly and was succeeded by Admiral von Holtzendorff.

The U-boat campaign of 1915 had thus broken down. To the west of England it had been given up altogether; but as a consolation new submarine bases are noted as having been established at Zeebrugge and in the Mediterranean. The total sinkings from February to December were believed to amount to 643,000 tons. To this figure the tonnage captured by the *Emden* and *Karlsruhe* made a certain addition, but there was no sign of distress in England. "The U-boat campaign," says Admiral Scheer, "dragged on, though with but moderate success, to the end of the year." The cost of freights had, however, risen considerably, and the prospects for the next year were worth a careful investigation.

### 3. THE GERMAN DEBATE OF 1916

In January 1916 the new Chief of the Naval Staff, Holtzendorff, handed in a Memorandum to the effect

that a new U-boat campaign could be undertaken under much more favourable circumstances than that of 1915, because England's tonnage was weaker and Germany's submarine force stronger. Such a campaign must not be hampered by "restrictions of a non-military nature": but, if unlimited, it offered a definite prospect that within a short time, at most six months, England would be forced to make peace. The United States, he added, were not in a position to lend aid by providing tonnage.

At this moment Admiral Scheer was appointed to the command of the Fleet. Though the Imperial Government rejected Holtzendorff's suggestion, Scheer considered it his first task to clear up the position with regard to the U-boat war. The Chief of the Staff, too, was confident of forcing the hand of the politicians, and assured his Commander-in-Chief that the unrestricted campaign would be inaugurated on March 1. But the neutrals continued to make trouble. The American people took a fundamentally different view of war,—what the German Admiral would call a "non-military" view—and they expressed their view forcibly. The German Government, after much argument, was driven to make a show of withdrawing from the most extreme position. They admitted, on February 9, 1916, that their method must be amended where it involved danger to neutrals, and they offered to pay a money compensation for the deaths of their American victims. They also repeated the pledge they had already given, and broken, that unarmed merchantmen should not be sunk without warning, and not unless the safety of the passengers and crew could be assured: provided that the vessels did not try to escape or resist. This is one more example of a



purely Germanic line of thought : no one but a German could seriously claim that he was justified in killing unarmed non-combatants or neutrals by the mere fact of their running away from him. As for the "safety of passengers and crew," we shall see presently how that was assured. But it matters little how the pledge was worded : it was intended only to be binding, like other treaties, *rebus sic stantibus*. This is now made clear beyond dispute by the publication of the German State Documents, in which we can trace the dissensions of an Imperial Council distracted by the exigencies of war policy, as menacing on the one side as the other. Time had been gained by a twice repeated promise, but the time gained was devoted to considering the advantages and disadvantages of breaking that promise once more. On February 19, 1916, ten days after the solemn pledge to America, the Imperial Chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg, delivered his opinion in a long Memorandum. He was seriously alarmed at the prospect before his country, and desired above all things that the fight should not be pushed to a finish. "The Chief Military Command denies the possibility of winning the war on land. It considers its end in any case only possible after England or ourselves shall have broken down. Nobody can assert that this view is mistaken." The position was bad, but to force it further would only make it desperate. "The declaration of a submarine war in the form in which the Admiralty Staff proposes to carry it on, *i.e.* by torpedoing without warning and without distinction all freight and passenger steamers under neutral as well as enemy flags, would of necessity be followed by the entry of the United States into the war. . . . It is only then that conditions will prevail

—and they will be our own creation—under which the war will have to be fought through to the bitterest end.” As to that end he has no hopes. “Before England capitulates—and that is the point—she will move heaven and earth in order to master her troubles.” The estimates of England’s possible tonnage losses, he thinks, show the naval experts to be at fault: they have forgotten newly built ships and the possibility of others being withdrawn from Salonika. America would bring in the German shipping interned in her ports; and also several hundred thousand volunteers. The war, in these aggravated circumstances, could not be carried to a successful conclusion, and “the question presents itself whether our position is so desperate that we should play a hazardous game in which the stakes would be our existence as a great Power and our whole national future. . . . The question must be negatived unreservedly.” He adds that “the breach with America could probably be averted if we conduct the U-boat war within the limits of International Law and the assurances given to the American Government.” Throughout this long and cogently written argument there is no word to suggest that International Law, considerations of humanity, or the honour of an official assurance were in themselves binding on the German Government: the question is posed as one of simple expediency.

The Imperial Chancellor was, however, in deadly earnest. On March 5 he wrote to Secretary of State von Jagow an account of a conference held the day before at Charleville, which is a striking revelation of the perplexities of the Kaiser and his counsellors. The Kaiser, who had previously agreed with Bethmann-Hollweg that “we had far too few U-boats to throw

England down," and that he would not commit the stupidity of driving America into war, now opened the discussion by stating Falkenhayn's argument on the other side. The war must be finished by the winter of 1916-17, "as our power of resistance, and especially that of our Allies, was drawing to an end. The successes to be hoped for on land were not sufficient to that end. England must be hit." The Kaiser then called upon Admiral von Holtzendorff to say what U-boat forces he had available for hitting her. This the Admiral did: "in doing so, however," says the Chancellor, "he repeatedly mixed up the figures of the U-boats ready for service and those in course of construction. Neither did questions put by His Majesty produce a clear picture. I did not gather the impression that His Majesty was better informed after the audience than before, anyway as to details." Still Holtzendorff was positive that "the end of England" would come in six or eight months, or even earlier. But "as the foundation of this opinion he only adduced the well-known general phrases."

Falkenhayn then spoke for himself. He had one strong point, against the Chancellor's half-measures. England would never come round till she was completely disabled: "he knew England and the English well enough to know that that would never happen." The U-boat war was therefore unavoidable if Germany was not to go under. No one replied to this speech, and the Kaiser made no comment. The conference broke up, leaving Holtzendorff under the impression that the U-boat war was definitely decided upon for the beginning of April. The Chancellor thought differently; and the Kaiser told him without reserve, two days afterwards, that the U-boats were in-



sufficient. "England could not be forced down any-way. If we provoked England to a sea fight and broke with America, every Englishman would give his last shirt before giving in." And in this both the Kaiser and his Chancellor showed a sound and candid judgement: they made no account of our handful of pacifists and despairing peers.

But the German Government continued to drift without an agreed policy, and before long drifted on to a rock. The U-boat commanders were either without clear orders, or they were reckless: some of them may even have determined to force the hand of their chiefs. On March 16 the French passenger steamer *Sussex*, carrying 270 women and children and 110 other passengers, was torpedoed without warning as she was approaching the French coast. Many were killed or severely injured by the explosion, others were drowned in getting out the boats. There were twenty-five Americans on board, and their indignation was intense; for the ship was unarmed, and carried no munitions or war stores of any kind. Nor, as President Wilson pointed out, did she follow the route of the transports or munition ships. She was simply a well-known passenger steamer, and the eighty of her company who perished were held to have been murdered in cold blood by pirates. The last word was here accurately used. Piracy, in International Law, is "any act or practice of violence or depredation, such as would be felonious if done ashore, committed upon the high seas by one not acting under the authority of a politically organised community." At this moment, as we now know, such an act was not done under authority.

President Wilson, however, could not know this,

and he went on to say that the German Government "has failed to appreciate the seriousness of the situation which has arisen, not only out of the attack on the *Sussex*, but out of the whole method and character of submarine warfare as they appear in consequence of the practice of indiscriminate destruction of merchantmen by commanders of German submarines. The United States Government," he continued, "has adopted a very patient attitude, and at every stage of this painful experience of tragedy upon tragedy has striven to be guided by well-considered regard for the extraordinary circumstances of an unexampled war. . . . To its pain, it has become clear to it that the standpoint which it adopted from the beginning is inevitably right—namely, that the employment of submarines for the destruction of enemy trade is of necessity completely irreconcilable with the principles of humanity, with the long-existing undisputed rights of neutrals, and with the sacred privileges of non-combatants."

This note touches the real point, and pronounces definitely upon it : until the submarine is as powerfully armed and armoured and manned with as large a crew as a cruiser of the ordinary kind, it is not a ship which can be used for the general purposes of blockade by any nation which observes the rules either of humane conduct or of International Law. And it may be added that, even if the Germans had possessed submarines of a suitable kind, they could not have brought their prizes into port, because our Fleet and not theirs had the control of the seas. As it was, they once more made a formal submission to the United States, and gave orders that merchant vessels "shall not be sunk without warning and without saving

human lives, unless these vessels attempt to escape or offer resistance." But under the cover of this new pledge the same discussion of policy was continued.

At first the debate went against Admiral Scheer. On April 30 he was informed that His Majesty approved of the interruption of the U-boat campaign against commerce, ordered by the Commander of the Fleet: the order to resume it would be given when the political and military situation should demand it. Scheer could only accept the decision, and in May, when the Naval Staff asked for his leave to resume the campaign "in accordance with Prize Law," he refused even this. The battle of Jutland, however, changed his view. In explaining the change he does not claim a victory or any material results of victory: his "idea" is that "the moral impression which this battle left on the neutral nations created a most favourable atmosphere for us to carry on the war against England by all possible means, and to resume the U-boat campaign in all its intensity." No more characteristic judgement was pronounced during the war—it is the *reductio ad absurdum* of the Bismarckian theory of *imponderabilia*. The atmosphere created by the first reports of the battle of Jutland was not only imponderable, but evanescent. When it vanished, the true result of the battle became as clear as a well-drawn balance-sheet. The High Sea Fleet had inflicted loss on a battle-cruiser squadron and had escaped with its life from the Grand Fleet: but the great experiment was over, never to be repeated, and it had proved that the control of the sea was irrevocably in British hands. No moral impression—least of all a temporary one—could be of any value in face of a reality like this, a reality which became every



day plainer to neutrals as well as enemies. Tirpitz showed almost as faulty a judgement: he notes that "that engagement, victorious though not fought to a finish, was unable, after nearly two years of the war, to achieve any lasting political result, in spite of our advantages in the battle itself: for in the time that had elapsed the general position had changed and settled too much in England's favour, and the countries that were still neutral had lost their belief in our ultimate victory." This estimate is more correct than Scheer's, for it marks the political result of the German account of Jutland as temporary and ineffectual; but it shows the Grand-Admiral to be equally unable to distinguish words from the realities of war. Nothing in the two years had done more to change and settle the position in England's favour than the battle of Jutland; for a superiority which had before been only demonstrable was there actually demonstrated.

The Naval Staff, however, had a better reason for demanding a renewal of the U-boat campaign, and it was, whether they realised it or not, a reason based upon the result of Jutland. The failure of the High Sea Fleet left them no other weapon but the submarine. If the unrestricted campaign could not be risked, then they begged to be allowed a milder form of war, so as to inflict at least some injury on England. Admiral Scheer objected to any milder form, and the Chief of the Naval Cabinet, Müller, remonstrated with him in a letter dated June 23, 1916, arguing against his "everything or nothing" point of view. "I can fully sympathise with you, but the matter is unfortunately not so simple. We were forced, though with rage in our hearts, to make concessions to

America, and in so doing to the neutrals in general ; but, on the other hand, we cannot wholly renounce the small interruptions of trade . . . still possible in the Mediterranean. It is the thankless task of the Chief of the Naval Staff to try and find some way of making this possible in British waters as well." What is necessary is "a compromise between the harsh professional conception of the U-boat weapon and the general, political, and military demands which the Chief of the Staff has to satisfy." The words "the harsh professional conception" are here strikingly apt, but they are not to be taken in a sympathetic sense, for the use of the weapon in question is only given up "with rage in our hearts."

This letter was followed a week later by a visit to Admiral Scheer from the Imperial Chancellor, who informed him that he was personally against an unrestricted U-boat campaign, because it would give rise to fresh troublesome incidents and "would place the fate of the German Empire in the hands of a U-boat commander." This made the Admiral extremely bitter : "So we did not wield our U-boat weapon as a sword which was certain to bring us victory, but (as my Chief of the Staff, Rear-Admiral von Trotha, put it) we used it as a soporific for the feelings of the nation, and presented the blunt edge to the enemy." The people did not know that the campaign was only big talk and pretence : while "America laughed because she knew that it lay with her to determine how far we might go."

Again the dispute dragged on, until towards the end of August a conference was summoned in which the military, naval, and political chiefs were all to take part. The minutes of this meeting are dated from

the castle of Pless, August 31, 1916, though Admiral Scheer speaks of it as "the meeting of September 3." There were present Hindenburg, who had recently become Chief of the General Staff; Ludendorff, who was then Quartermaster-General; General Wild von Hohenborn, War Minister; Admirals von Capelle (Secretary of the Navy), von Holtzendorff (Chief of the Admiralty Staff), and Koch; Bethmann-Hollweg, Imperial Chancellor; Helfferich, Minister of the Interior; and Jagow, Secretary for Foreign Affairs; with Baron von Grünau as Secretary.

Holtzendorff opened the discussion by declaring that England must be prevented by any means from continuing the war; and he added: "It lies in our power to break England's will to war by the end of the year"—that is, in four months. But "by refraining from the use of the U-boat, *finis Germaniae* will be brought in sight."

Helfferich replied that England's bread-supply was secure for four or five months without imports, and the percentage of tonnage destroyed was small. U-boat war would make a breach and war with America unavoidable. "To-day," he concluded, "I can see in the employment of the U-boat weapon nothing but catastrophe."

Admiral von Capelle proclaimed the conviction of the Navy that nothing but the unrestricted U-boat war would lead to peace, and added some weaker remarks, to the effect that in any event it could not do harm, even "failing full success."

After some bickering between Holtzendorff and Helfferich, the Imperial Chancellor intervened. He had had a preliminary discussion with Hindenburg, and agreed with him that a decision was not possible



on this question while the military position was so uncertain. At the present moment unrestricted U-boat war would be stamped from the start as "an act of desperation." He further proved his superiority in judgement over his naval colleagues by affirming that the expected result—the breaking of England—was merely an assumption, which nobody could prove. "We cannot lay an iron ring round England. Also our blockade can be broken by warships accompanying the transports." It seemed to him, therefore, that they could decide nothing "till the military situation had been cleared."

Holtzendorff replied—it sounds an impulsive reply—"I am convinced—I cannot adduce any proof—that a fortnight's unrestricted U-boat war will have this effect, that the neutrals will keep aloof from England." In this matter the Norwegians were to teach him a lesson in psychology.

Capelle then spoke of the powers of the large U-boats, whose number had been doubled. Helfferich argued that the only result would be extreme exertion and perfected organisation in England. Holtzendorff retorted: "We find ourselves in a tight position, to get out of which we must act. We need not threaten the neutrals, but we can invite them to behave towards us as they behaved towards England"—a line of thought adopted already, as we have seen, by Scheer and Tirpitz, but unintelligible to any reasonable mind. He concluded with an interesting admission. Now is the time: we shall have more U-boats by next spring, "but it cannot be foreseen what the reserve crews will be like."

The two Generals and the War Minister then spoke in succession and ended the debate: nothing must

be done till the military position was settled. "A decision is not possible at present," said Hindenburg autocratically. "I shall make the time for it known." The Navy had nothing more to say: the German policy was an Army policy. But Jagow put in a last word, which shows once more that the thinking power of Germany lay with her civilians rather than with her militarists. The neutrals, he said, evidently replying to Capelle, could not be conciliated: they showed tremendous unrest during the previous U-boat campaign, and naturally so. "The difference between our method and England's is, above all, to be found in the fact that we would be destroying ships and human life in order to exert pressure, whereas by the English method the neutrals are only restricted in the free exercise of their activity." This simple discovery is significant, as having been made by each nation in its own way. To the Dutch and Scandinavian traders it came as a practical matter of business: to the Latin mind it was laid bare by the clear, quick light of reason: to the Anglo-Saxon by the equally swift flash of humour. The German statesman reached it by the long and serious groping of a methodic mind: the German admirals could never see it at all, even when it was pointed out to them.

Admiral Scheer in particular was quite unconvinced. He took an opportunity to send his Chief of Staff to Headquarters to consult with General Ludendorff, and they agreed that there was no possibility of bringing the war to a satisfactory end without ruthless U-boat warfare, that on no account must a half-and-half campaign be started, that the separate treaties with the Northern neutral States must be cancelled

with all speed, and that the U-boat campaign should be begun as soon as possible: finally, that "in no circumstances must there be any yielding." The reason against a half-and-half or Prize Law campaign is given: it "could not achieve anything of importance, but involved the same military dangers, and would probably result in a new limitation for the nation." Ludendorff, like the naval chiefs, shut his eyes against the American danger, and Scheer's emissary was able to report to him that "the question of the U-boat campaign could not be in better hands than in those of the Chief of the General Staff of the Army." Admiral Scheer felt this to be confirmed by his own subsequent discussion with Hindenburg and Ludendorff on November 22. The short-sighted felt it a support to be led by the blind.

#### 4. THE PEACE OFFER

The militarists had now to wait a month while the politicians put forward "peace proposals." For this move the Kaiser appears to have been personally responsible. He explained, in a letter to the Imperial Chancellor at the end of October, that it was in his opinion "an act necessary to deliver the world, including neutrals, from an obsession" of "war-psychosis." Accordingly, in the speech in the Reichstag, in which he announced the opening of negotiations, as well as in the Note issued to the neutral intermediaries, Bethmann-Hollweg took the magnanimous, Imperial, innocent, and minatory tone which was as like his master as it was unlike himself. In the Note he dwelt on the indestructible strength of Germany and her Allies, and their



unswerving "conviction that respect for the rights of other nations is not in any degree incompatible with their own rights and legitimate interests": he added that "they feel sure that the propositions which they would bring forward, and which would aim at assuring the existence, honour, and free development of their peoples, would be such as to serve as a basis for the restoration of a lasting peace." In the Reichstag he repeated these points, and added two more, evidently for the sake of their effect at home. "In August 1914 our enemies challenged the superiority of power in a world war: to-day we raise the question of peace, which is a question of humanity. We expect that the answer of our enemies will be given with that serenity of mind which is guaranteed to us by our external and internal strength, and by our clear conscience. If our enemies decline and wish to take upon themselves the world's heavy burden of all those terrors which will follow thereupon, then even in the least and humblest homes every German heart will burn in sacred wrath against our enemies, who are unwilling to stop human slaughter because they desire to continue their plans of conquest and annihilation. In a fateful hour we took a fateful decision. God will be judge."

This voice of the "clear conscience" is not the voice of Bethmann-Hollweg, certainly not the voice of that Bethmann-Hollweg who in August 1914 spoke candidly of "the wrong that we have done in Belgium." Nor could it be considered a tactful utterance, suited to its ostensible purpose. The question arose whether it was in any way sincere, or only a move in the game. In England some half-dozen unnerved men and a few pacifists asserted that

it was a genuine offer, and that we were bound both by religion and by our hopeless military position to accept it. In every country of the Entente the opposite view was held by the great majority. It was of course at that time a matter of opinion, or of instinct and the fighting spirit: it can now be examined as a matter of fact. We know now that the German generals had pronounced the military position hopeless and the national position desperate: the admirals had declared that Germany could only be saved by a ruthless U-boat campaign, which the politicians, on the other hand, maintained to mean "nothing but catastrophe." We know also that the naval and military chiefs had agreed to force on the U-boat campaign and in no circumstances to admit any yielding. Of the Kaiser we know that in July 1914 he was vehemently anxious that the Austrian demands on Serbia should be stiffened beyond the possibility of acceptance: he, at any rate, could not honestly say that the challenge came from his enemies. We come back to the politicians: was Bethmann-Hollweg sincere, though inconsistent? Was he trying, was he allowed to try, by a real offer of peace, to save Germany from the deadly dilemma which he had so clearly explained to the Kaiser and his less capable advisers?

To begin with the offer itself: we have already seen that neither Note nor speech gave any real offer: what the proposals were to be was not stated, not even hinted at. The Entente by responding would accept the German claims as to the origin of the war and the indestructible strength of the Central Powers, and they would be exposed to the risks involved in refusing the terms when offered, however impossible

they proved to be. We know, however, that Bethmann-Hollweg did think the bait might take. He telegraphed, on December 19, to Hindenburg: "I do not consider it impossible that our adversaries may express their readiness to enter into peace negotiations with certain reservations." He goes on to ask "whether it is thinkable to make our consent to an armistice dependent on such conditions that the disadvantage should not be ours but our enemies." It is extraordinary that such a bait should have seemed to him sufficiently attractive: among its ingredients there was not a word of reparation for the past or restitution of invaded territory, but, on the contrary, there was the remarkable assertion that the Germans had never swerved from the conviction that the rights of other nations were not in any degree incompatible with their own rights and legitimate interests: to the friends of Belgium and Serbia surely not a convincing statement. The explanation is that Bethmann-Hollweg was only considering possibilities: it was necessary for him to be ready to meet any answer, but the answer for which he had schemed was beyond doubt a refusal, and his object, or the object of the All-Highest whom he obeyed, was the resumption of the U-boat war. This statement may appear to assume an astonishing inconsistency in the Kaiser and his Chancellor, but its truth is not to be questioned. In a telegram dated October 1, 1916, Bethmann-Hollweg protested to Grünau against a decision reported to have been taken without an agreement with himself and the sanction of His Majesty, and set out the existing situation. "We have, as everybody knows, promised America to wage the U-boat war only in accordance with the Prize



Regulations. By personal command of His Majesty, Count Bernstorff has been instructed to induce President Wilson to issue an appeal for peace. Provided that Wilson can be so induced, the probable rejection of the appeal by England and her Allies, while we accept it, is intended to afford us a basis upon which we can morally justify the withdrawal of our promise to America before all the world, and above all before the European neutrals, and thus influence their probable attitude in the future." He adds that "before the situation has been cleared in that respect," and His Majesty's commands received, no U-boat campaign can be announced.

In face of this document, can it be doubted that the German Peace offer, as well as the American one to be procured by Bernstorff, was deliberately planned as a preliminary to the ruthless U-boat campaign?

We have other evidence, and it all points in the same direction. On this same day, December 19, Mr. Gerard, the American Ambassador, arrived in Copenhagen and saw the Austrian Ambassador. Gerard foreshadowed a peace move from the American President, the Pope, and possibly the King of Spain. He then—and this must clearly have been in answer to a question or hint from the Austrian Ambassador—"laid stress on his apprehension at the possible resumption of the unrestricted submarine war. In his opinion even the unconditional rejection of the peace offer on the part of the Entente would not be sufficient ground for disregarding on principle the fundamental international laws as hitherto recognised." The United States, if provoked, would enter the war. At the moment when Mr. Gerard spoke President Wilson's Note had already been received

by the British Government. It was "in no way prompted by the recent overtures of the Central Powers": indeed, it could not have been expressed better if it had been designed to show up their principal defect. The President "is not proposing peace: he is not even offering mediation": he is seeking "to call out from all the nations now at war . . . an avowal of their respective views as to the terms upon which the war might be concluded." Such an avowal could well be made by the Entente Powers: they had only to ask for restitution, reparation, and guarantees. But Germany could not avow her aims, for either they were incompatible with these and proved her guilt, or they were not incompatible, and therefore admitted her guilt. This dilemma had been perceived by the Germans as soon as they received from the Papal Nuncio the first news of President Wilson's action. On December 18 Count Wedel, the Ambassador at Vienna, telegraphed to the Berlin Foreign Office: "Baron Burian agrees with your Excellency, and considers it probable that we shall be compelled to reject. Our reply should in his opinion be so worded that our tactical position shall not become worse, and that the possibility shall not be precluded of continuing to spin the thread." It is quite clear that what Germany will be compelled to reject is the statement of any proposed terms, the only thing which the Pope or the President had suggested, and the conclusion is therefore irresistible that such a statement of terms being impossible for Germany, her peace offer could not have been honestly intended—in other words, it was a tactical move, an offer made to clear the situation for the militarists. The action of the naval and military chiefs irresistibly enforces this view. The

reply of the Entente to the German Peace Note was sent to the American Ambassador in Paris for transmission to Berlin on December 30, 1916. But the militarists had not waited for it: within ten days of the German offer, and only three days after President Wilson's embarrassing suggestion, they had taken fresh action. On December 22 the Chief of the Naval Staff, Holtzendorff, had once more, in a detailed Memorandum to Hindenburg, given urgent reasons for adopting the unrestricted U-boat campaign. He used all the old arguments, and added that without this method England could not be effectively starved, and "further, the psychological elements of fear and panic would be lacking." He had also, Admiral Scheer has no doubt, pressed the same view upon the Cabinet. But the Cabinet, being at the moment busy spinning the thread, returned evasive answers. This time, however, the Army, too, was calling for action. On December 20 Ludendorff had telegraphed to the Foreign Office that he took Lloyd George's speech in the House of Commons to be a refusal of the peace offer, and was convinced, "by reason of impressions gained at the West front, that the submarine war must be begun with all severity." On the 23rd Hindenburg followed with another telegram: "The diplomatic and military preparations for the unrestricted submarine war should be begun now, so that it may for certain set in at the end of January."

Bethmann-Hollweg himself replied to this, pointing out once more that the position must first be made clear with regard to America. This could not be done until the Entente had given a formal reply to the German peace offer. "At present nobody can foresee what it will be. In all probability it will be



negative, but might nevertheless leave a loophole. We must not close this. This would happen should we begin action . . . before the receipt of the reply. Thereby the political success we have achieved through our peace offer . . . would be seriously impaired. Even now, we meet with the assumption that we got up the whole peace action *mala fide* and merely as a way of working up to the unrestricted submarine war." A bad impression had also been produced by the German Press, which, like Ludendorff, had replied to Lloyd George's speech and Wilson's Note with an immediate "cry for the submarines."

But the forces of violence were now beyond Bethmann-Hollweg's power to control or moderate. Holtzendorff was urging Hindenburg to disregard America. He wrote that a large number of volunteers might be gathered in the United States, but that the conditions for training them did not exist, and "any great reinforcement of the enemy armies from America must founder already on the question of transport." If unrestricted U-boat war were proclaimed and instantly put into execution, "then will terror seize hold of shipping, the British people, and the neutrals," and success may be expected for a certainty within at most five months.

Falkenhayn's Memorandum to the Imperial Chancellor was equally decided and throws a glaring light on the German terms—the terms which could not be avowed in the Peace negotiations. England, he argued, is as much bound as Germany to carry on the war to the bitter end: the fear that she will be "driven to extremes" lacks all substance. "Just as for us the war must be declared lost if the entry

of Belgium into our 'concern' is not enforced, England loses it if she has to allow such a transfer." He is very plain on this point. "No doubt can exist that the country must remain at our disposal as a strategical area for protection of the most important German industrial district, and as hinterland for our position on the Flanders coast, which is indispensable to our maritime importance."

Tirpitz followed at the beginning of January with a Memorandum to the same address. "We cannot throw down England by land war alone . . . England cannot defend herself effectively against the U-boat attacks. . . . For that reason the U-boat war is at the present moment the most dangerous, and, if forcibly conducted, the absolutely decisive form of warfare against England."

The Kaiser was of the same opinion as his generals : for him the rejection of his peace offer, whether expected or not, justified everything. On January 2 he declared to Grünau that "after rejecting our efforts for the third time, King Albert could not be allowed to return to Belgium ; the coast of Flanders must become ours." "*Ce roi est très méchant : quand on l'attaque, il se défend.*"

The struggle lay finally between Bethmann-Hollweg, the vacillating, and Hindenburg, the peremptory. The latter had already put the Imperial Chancellor in his place by a very sharply worded telegram on December 26 : "I must state that although your Excellency in your capacity as Imperial Chancellor certainly claims the exclusive responsibility, in full consciousness of my responsibility for a victorious issue of the war, I shall naturally use all my endeavour to see that all I consider proper will

be done from the military side." He followed this, on December 31, with a browbeating letter on peace terms: "Your Excellency's statement on the 29th that it might not be possible for us to retain the mining districts of Briey, has filled me with doubt as to Your Excellency's fundamental standpoint." This letter and the comparatively statesmanlike reply which it drew from the Chancellor confirm the view that Bethmann-Hollweg, though a weak man among professional bruisers, was the only one of them all whose lines of thought were such as to be fully intelligible to men of non-Germanic birth and education.

But the limit of his intermittent resistance had now been reached. Admiral Scheer, in great anxiety lest the same concession as before should be made to America, sent a representative—Captain von Levetzow—to Berlin, to convey an urgent warning against "such a middle course." This emissary apparently found his task an easy one: and we can guess why. He saw Bethmann-Hollweg on January 8, and the same date stands at the head of a telegram to the Chancellor from Hindenburg at Pless. "I have the honour to inform Your Excellency that according to the military situation, the intensified submarine war can, and therefore should, begin on February 1." The Chancellor hurried to Pless the same evening, and on the following day, says Admiral Scheer, the decisive session took place, when the Chief of the Naval Staff insisted on the necessity of the step, as explained in his memorandum to the Field-Marshal, and convinced His Majesty as well. This was evidently a mere formality, to cover the actual decision which had been made by Hindenburg: the procedure was completed by a telegraphic order



“sent by the All-Highest to the Chief of the Naval Staff”—who either had or had not just left his presence. “I command that the unrestricted U-boat campaign shall begin on February 1, in full force . . . the fundamental plans of operation are to be submitted to me.”

It is more than probable that the Kaiser's histrionic powers enabled him to believe in this command as the issue of his own will : and there can be no doubt that it was in no way discordant with his own wishes. But the truth is illuminated by the following telegram sent by Lersner, the Secretary at Pless (Headquarters), and marked as “only for the Imperial Chancellor and the Secretary of State”!

“His Majesty has received a large number of telegrams of assent and devotion in reply to his proclamation to the German people. In strict confidence, I hear that Field-Marshal Hindenburg and General Ludendorff are responsible for a great number of these, in order to show the world how unanimous all Germany is in its loyalty to the Emperor. His Majesty has expressed himself highly pleased at these marks of homage. Their widest publication in the press would, in my humble opinion, cause His Majesty much pleasure.”

## 5. UNRESTRICTED U-BOAT WAR

The year 1916 had been a very trying one for the German people : they had been distracted by the conflict of two feelings—exultation in the power of their U-boats, and dread of the increasing hostility of the neutral nations, and especially of America. Each of these feelings had been in turn stimulated by

their military and political chiefs, who were in open disagreement. Admiral Scheer complains of both parties: the political leaders, he says, had done all in their power to undermine public confidence, and had succeeded in affecting timid souls with their own fear that this kind of warfare might burden Germany with new enemies. On the other hand, the Naval Staff had been foolish enough to make predictions and fix dates for the downfall of England: they had allowed these calculations, which were—or ought to have been—intended only for a narrow circle, to be published throughout the country. He might have added that the perpetual pressure which he and his colleagues kept up in favour of a new ruthless campaign could not fail to make itself felt in every direction, and that the Supreme Military Command had made no effort to curb the Press, which followed Ludendorff's "cry for the submarines." Given the German temperament and these suggestions from above, it is easy to understand the violence of the cross-tide which was swinging the nation between enormous waves of "joyful pride" and unrestrained terror. "The German," says Tirpitz, "only sins in exuberance of feeling because . . . he wavers between the two extremes—the fear of power and the intoxication of power."

In spite of the long negotiations with America and the promises made under compulsion, the intoxication of power produced during 1916 some very remarkable effects. First, there was the war on hospital ships. On March 17, 1916, the Russian hospital ship *Portugal* was torpedoed off the Turkish coast in the Black Sea. She carried no wounded, but had on board a large crew and a staff of Red Cross nurses and orderlies.

It was a clear morning, the ship was flying the Red Cross flag, and had a Red Cross painted conspicuously on every funnel ; but she was deliberately destroyed, with 85 of those on board, including 21 nurses and 24 other members of the Red Cross staff. On November 21, a British hospital ship, the *Britannic*, was sunk in the same way. She was a huge vessel, and had on board 1125 people, of whom 25 were doctors, 76 nurses, and 399 medical staff. The German claim was that the sinking was justified by "the suspicion of the misuse of the hospital ship for purposes of transport," but this suspicion was wholly unfounded, and it was not even shown that the U-boat commander had taken any steps to inquire into the truth. By the instructions issued to the submarine service in February 1915, it had been ordered that hospital ships "may only be attacked when they are *obviously* used for the transport of troops." It is not known that these instructions had been cancelled so far as hospital ships were concerned, and the probability seems to be that the sinkings were the independent acts of U-boat commanders of "exuberant feeling," afterwards authorised and defended by their superiors. Admiral Scheer justifies them by the statement that English hospital ships were "patently used as transports," but offers no evidence and does not even claim to possess any.

A still more astonishing development is almost certainly to be accounted for by exuberant feeling, stimulated not by definite instructions, but by suggestions, official and unofficial, transmitted through the Press. The *Rappahannock*, a ship which sailed with a crew of 37 from Halifax on October 17, 1916, was never heard of again except in the wireless message by



which the German Admiralty reported her destruction. The plan of sinking without a trace was first officially recommended by Count Luxburg, the German diplomatic agent in the Argentine; but the German Professor Flamm, of Charlottenburg, also proposed it publicly in the paper *Die Woche*. "The best would be if destroyed neutral ships disappeared without leaving a trace, and with everything on board, because terror would very quickly keep seamen and travellers away from the danger zones, and thus save a number of lives." No doubt the *Rappahannock* was "spurlos versenkt"; so was the *North Wales*, and so were many others meant to be. The German U-boat commanders' method, in 1916, was to torpedo the ship, and then shell the survivors in their open boats. This was done in the cases of the *Kildare* and *Westminster*, both sunk in the Mediterranean; but on neither occasion was the attempt to kill the whole of the crew successful, and the facts therefore became known. The result was a cry of protest from the whole civilised world: but the Germans were not to be deterred. In the following eight months their submarines fired upon the helpless survivors of at least twelve ships, enumerated with authentic details in a list published by *The Times* on August 20, 1917.

Here we probably have an example of a genuine German misunderstanding of their enemies' point of view. Admiral Scheer makes it a general charge against us that in English views on the war two points are invariably and entirely lacking: the English never admit "the necessity of war" for their opponent, and never recognise the difference between unavoidable severity and deliberate brutality. It is quite true that we have always condemned as deliberate brutality

such acts as the sinking of ships without a trace : it is also probably true that even Germans, accustomed to violence and crime in their own country, would hardly have faced the indignation of the world in so reckless a manner if they had not been supported by something like a consciousness of right. The right upon which they generally relied was the necessity of war, the right of unavoidable severity. It is almost incomprehensible to the rest of the Western world, but it is the fact, that even to this extreme the German mind was dominated by the theory of Power and the morality deducible from it. The theory of Power demands that Germany shall be victorious : the necessity of war demands that in order to win she shall sink neutral ships and yet escape the neutrals' wrath : therefore she must sink them without a trace. The brutal act is justified if it is a case of unavoidable severity : there all nations must agree, for all have acted upon the principle. The difference between us is that to a German "unavoidable" means "unavoidable if Germany is to win" : to others the rule implies, or should imply, that the "unavoidable" nature of an act is determined by more considerations than one, and of these mere national self-interest is not the most important. The civilised and the chivalrous are always conscious, even in wartime, that there are other rights in the world beside their own ; and, above all, that there are certain blows which it is not lawful to strike in any circumstances whatever, because they involve the ruin of all human society and the corruption of all human feeling. To save the world from perishing by its own brutality, rules of war have been made and agreed upon : they have been inadequate, but century by century they have been more and more

the hope of humanity, until it was held to be common ground among the greater nations that the only "unavoidable necessity" in war was the necessity of obeying them. The German theory, alone and for the first time, has attempted to substitute a new major premise for the old one; to define necessary acts as those necessary for the victory of one nation and not for the safety of all. In this attempt Germany, her Kaiser, her people, her militarists, and her politicians, set themselves against the instincts and interests of the civilised nations, and whatever our own feelings may be, we may well lay them aside to watch the course of the inevitable downfall which followed.

"The strategic offensive," says Admiral Scheer proudly, "passed definitely to the Navy on February 1, 1917." The phrase is a good example of the German's habit of setting up words in place of realities, as the Chinese used to set up paper soldiers on the Great Wall. In the text-book of war by Clausewitz, a certain value is attached to the strategic offensive, but not under all conditions. The German Admiral speaks of the new U-boat campaign as "an energetic attack on England's might"; he describes it correctly but incompletely. It was more than that: it was a declaration of war against the civilised world and its ideals, a move which can never be "strategic" in any advantageous sense.

On January 31, 1917, Germany proclaimed her intention of sinking at sight every ship found in the waters around the British Isles and the coast of France, or in the Mediterranean Sea. It was at the same time announced that the German Government had conclusive proof of the misuse of hospital ships for the transport of munitions and troops, and that there-



fore the traffic of hospital ships within certain areas "would no longer be tolerated." The accusation was false, and the German Government never attempted to make good the proof which was said to be conclusive; but they lost no time in fulfilling the threat based upon it, and this time it is impossible to attribute the attacks on hospital ships to the mistakes or unauthorised brutality of the U-boat commanders.

The strategic offensive had only been two days in operation when President Wilson handed the German Ambassador his passports and recalled the American Ambassador from Berlin. His announcement to Congress of this severance of diplomatic relations was accompanied by the hint of a "last chance" for the German Government: he could not believe that they meant "to do in fact what they have warned us they feel at liberty to do," but if they proved it by sinking American ships and destroying American lives, he would take steps to protect his people.

The *Housatonic* was sunk on the same day, and the *Lyman M. Law* ten days later. On February 26 the House of Representatives voted for the arming of American merchantmen; on the same day the *Laconia* was sunk and 8 Americans were drowned. On March 12 the order was issued for the arming of merchantmen; on the 16th the *Vigilancia* was sunk and 5 Americans perished; on the 17th the *City of Memphis* and the *Illinois* were sunk; on the 21st the *Healdton* carried down 7 more Americans; on April 1, 28 more were lost in the *Aztec*. These acts came within the express words of the President's warning, but there were others which added force to the rising tide of indignation. On the night of March 20 the British hospital ship *Asturias*, steaming with

all navigating lights, and with all the proper Red Cross signs brilliantly illuminated, was torpedoed and sunk without warning. Of the medical staff on board 14 were lost, including one nurse; and of the ship's company 29, including one stewardess. On March 30 the *Gloucester Castle* was torpedoed without warning, but her wounded were all got off in safety.

On April 2 these incidents of the strategic offensive brought about their natural result. President Wilson called an early session of Congress and laid before it a concise statement of the facts. This time he did not stand for American rights only. "It is a war," he said, "against all nations. We must put excited feelings away: our motive will not be revenge or the victorious assertion of the physical might of the nation, but only the vindication of right, of human right. The wrongs against which we now array ourselves are no common wrongs: they cut to the very roots of human life." The message had one other notable point: its operative clause was a call not for a declaration but an acceptance of war. "I advise," said the President, "that the Congress declare the recent course of the Imperial German Government to be in fact nothing less than war against the Government and people of the United States: that it formally accept the status of belligerent which has thus been thrust upon it." The situation thus created was certainly not that referred to by Clausewitz as a source of strength.

On April 4 and 6 war resolutions were passed in both Houses of Congress, and to bring the conflict to a successful termination all the resources of the country were thereby pledged. These included unequalled wealth, a powerful fleet, an immense capacity

for shipbuilding, and an army which, though small at the moment, was potentially the largest in the world. They included also forces even more formidable—an indomitable spirit and a highly strung belief in precisely those ideals which formed the bond of union of the Western Powers. Germany had chosen to make the issue one upon which there could be no compromise.

She continued to do so. On April 17 the *Donegal* and the *Lanfranc*, both hospital ships, were sunk while bringing wounded to British ports. In the *Donegal* 29 wounded were lost and 12 of the crew. The sinking of the *Lanfranc* was doubly unfortunate for the German name: she carried, besides 234 British wounded and a medical staff of 52, a batch of wounded German prisoners to the number of 167, including officers. "The moment the torpedo struck the *Lanfranc*," wrote a British officer on board, "the Prussians made a mad rush for the lifeboats. One of their officers came up to a boat close to which I was standing. I shouted to him to go back, whereupon he stood and scowled: 'You *must* save us.' I told him to wait his turn. Other Prussians showed their cowardice by dropping on their knees and imploring pity. Some cried 'Kamerad,' as they do on the battlefield. I allowed none of them to pass me. . . . In these moments, while wounded Tommies lay in their cots unaided, the Prussian *moral* dropped to zero. Our cowardly prisoners made another crazy effort to get into a lifeboat. They managed to crowd into one—it toppled over. The Prussians were thrown into the water, and they fought with each other in order to reach another boat containing a number of gravely wounded British soldiers. . . .



The behaviour of our own lads I shall never forget"—but there is no need to go further: the incident is given here, not for the sake of comparing the courage of two nations, both abounding in brave men, but to illustrate the result of a peculiar way of thinking and theorising. To the Prussian it is self-evident that whoever else perishes, he must be saved: it follows naturally, since he has been taught by his professors that he alone, as a German, can have a nationality, a language, or a culture-value. We may have smiled at such doctrine as mere word-coinage; but we cannot refuse to see that even false currency, when placed in the slot of the Prussian mind, does work the machine.

It is only fair to remember that the Germans in the *Lanfranc* were acting under the impulse of sudden and extreme terror: at such a moment it may well have been difficult to subdue the influences of Prussian instinct and Prussian education. But as the campaign went on they gave examples of a callous and even a ferocious contempt for all human life that was not German life. At 8 P.M. on July 31, 1917, the *Belgian Prince* was torpedoed without warning: the crew escaped in three boats. The submarine then ordered the boats to come alongside, took the master on board, and sent him below. "Then," says Mr. Thomas Bowman, chief engineer, "all the crew and officers were ordered aboard, searched, and the lifebelts taken off most of the crew and thrown overboard. I may add, during this time the Germans were very abusive towards the crew. After this the German sailors got into the two lifeboats, threw the oars, bailers, and gratings overboard, took out the provisions and compasses, and then damaged the lifeboats with an axe. The small boat was left intact,

and five German sailors got into her and went towards the sinking ship. When they boarded her, they signalled to the submarine with a flash-lamp, and then the submarine cast the damaged lifeboats adrift and steamed away from the ship for about two miles, after which she stopped. About 9 P.M. the submarine dived, and threw everybody in the water without any means of saving themselves."

Mr. Bowman swam till daylight, and was picked up by a chance patrol boat. The only other survivors were a man named Sillessi and an American named Snell, who had succeeded in hiding a lifebelt under his overcoat.

The intention here was, of course, that the *Belgian Prince* should be "spurlos versenkt"; and in other cases the same result was aimed at by ramming and sinking the boats with the shipwrecked men in them. The crews of the French steamers *Lyndiane* and *Zumaya* were destroyed in this way in the summer of 1918; and on June 27 the case of the *Llandoverly Castle* furnished perhaps the most extreme example of a daring which is German alone. This hospital ship was first torpedoed and sunk without warning, though she was showing all her distinguishing lights. Then, after she had gone down, the German commander took his U-boat on a smashing-up cruise among the survivors, and by hurling it hither and thither he succeeded in ramming and sinking all the boats and rafts except one, which escaped in the darkness. The survivors of this boat heard the sound of gun-fire behind them for some time; it can only be conjectured that the work of the U-boat was being finished with shrapnel. The number of those done to death was 244.

## 6. THE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE

The acts above described form a small but characteristic part of the German submarine record. The total number of women, children, and non-combatants killed in the course of the U-boat blockade was more than seventeen thousand. The material damage done was great: nine millions of British and six millions of Allied and neutral shipping were sunk, to the impoverishment of the whole world, and eventually of Germany herself. The failure of the blockade has been already related: it was due to the courage and tenacity first of the British sailors and, secondly, of the Norwegians and others. These brave men were only too brave: not only did they utterly falsify all the German hopes of "panic and fear," but they even at times played into the hand of their enemy by showing too habitual a contempt for precaution and disguise. It was due also to the failure of the submarine itself to survive the measures taken for its destruction. To these measures, says Admiral Scheer, "we could oppose nothing but the skill of the U-boats in evading the enemy: this skill never failed to the very end, though our losses grew heavy." This view of "skill in evading the enemy" as the only resource of a strategic offensive would have surprised Clausewitz: and it will surprise any reader of the Admiral's book to know how rapidly and completely the skill declined both offensively and defensively. He has admitted that the sinkings of merchant tonnage fell steadily from June 1917 to September 1918 in the proportion of 5 to 2; and Tirpitz complains that in April 1918 the new U-boats could only reach, by dint of the utmost strain on



the crews and heavy losses, the same monthly record as they were able to maintain in 1915 with a quarter of the boats and in 1916 with a third, and then with comparatively little effort. But they do not give the explanation in plain terms: neither of them has noted that the sinkings of U-boats advanced from 8 per quarter at the earlier of the dates mentioned to 10 per month at the later, nor have they referred to the fact that to keep the struggle going at all it became necessary to find crews by depleting the High Sea Fleet, and material by abandoning work upon some battleships and breaking up others. To every weapon of war there is an answer: to the submarine there are several answers, and they are fatal ones. Unless the blindness and the fragility of these boats can be obviated, unless they can be constructed to attack without seeing or being seen, and to survive the shock of any explosion, they can never again attempt a blockade with hope of success. Their chance lay in our unpreparedness: at the end of the war they were not so much the hunters as the hunted, praised by their Commander-in-Chief not for attacking, but for evading their enemy.

The submarine then is not the danger of the future: it can be left to the destroyer, the patrol boat, the hunting submarine, the aircraft, the mine, the depth-charge, and the paravane. That problem we have solved: a more difficult one remains. What is to be the safeguard of civilisation against an attack, not with the same weapon, but on similar lines: that is to say, an attack planned and forced on in accordance with the theory of the State as Power, the religion of power as the sanction of morality, the "harsh professional view" of war, and the "unavoidable"

necessity of excluding all "non-military" considerations. There is still in the world a nation which has lately acted upon, and acted up to, these principles : what probability is there of that nation attempting, and can it be prevented from attempting, another such attack by more deadly and more carefully prepared means ? The question is one for the historian, for history supplies, not indeed the answer, but the data which suggest the answer ; and it is especially one for the naval historian, since not the war on land but the naval war, and particularly the submarine war, proved to be the main battlefield on which were displayed the opposing ideals.

It is not for one short book or a single writer to attempt a solution of so intricate and deep a problem ; but it is possible to suggest lines of thought in accordance with the nature of the evidence.

The war has seemed to us to throw a glaring light upon the German national character : it is important to consider whether we have discovered in nearly two years of peace any reason for modifying our judgement. We may feel that Germany as represented by her leaders, by her U-boat captains, by the loudest and most numerous of her population, has shown herself to be practically a united people, practically unanimous about the methods which marked the war. If a verdict is to be taken, an international tribunal must deal with all Germans as with a single individual. But if in fact the nation was, or is, not homogeneous, not one in its belief about war, we shall be in a far more hopeful position for the future, and the relief to our own feelings will be great. Let us begin by considering whether the motives which we commonly cover under the word

"humanity" are or are not effectual motives with any section of the German people. We shall find that the pattern is at any rate not so uniform as we came to believe it when we could only see and hear distantly across the gulf of war and anger. The German inheritance is certainly an unhappy one, but we ought now to remember what we were forced for four years to forget, that there are in it elements of philosophy, of poetry, of music, and of homely affection, and that in the years before the Machiavellian disease became endemic under Bismarck, Germany was a spiritual hostelry for many great Englishmen. There can be little doubt that the rapid increase of violence and brutal crime proved by Aschaffenburg was closely connected with this disease and with the material prosperity which undermined, as Baron von Hügel tells us, the moral health of the nation. Now that the material prosperity has disappeared and the "intoxication of power" has become impossible it does not seem unlikely that the old qualities may reappear among the educated classes of Germany and mitigate the national character as they did a hundred years ago. Not much perhaps can be hoped for from the military or political leaders of 1914: the word "humanity" is very seldom used by German Generals, Admirals, or Secretaries of State, and when it is used it is only a word of controversy, a form of *tu quoque* and generally irrelevant. The feelings which it represents for us it seems not to convey to them; and the principle which bears the name with us they expressly exclude from their theory of war. But there is this significant fact: though in their conferences and correspondence among themselves they simply ignored considerations



of humanity as if they had never heard of them, yet in their public utterances they appealed to such motives as public men in other countries have done, both in their own favour and against their enemies. What they said may have been intended partly to affect neutral opinion, but it cannot be doubted that it was also addressed to a section at home. We may remember that in preparing for the war it had been thought necessary to deal with two opposite types of mind: the violently German were to be inspired by the hope of victorious annexations and increased national wealth, the timidly German were to be strung up to a war of defence. The timidity of this second class may have been in reality what we should call gentleness or decent feeling, it may even more probably have been the expression of a theoretical disbelief in war as a political method. In October 1918, before the war had actually ended, we find Herr Haase saying openly in the Reichstag: "Most of the Parties are now trying to get away from the accentuated submarine war . . . in reality all the Parties, except the Socialist Minority, share the guilt. The first resolution in favour of submarine war was drafted by all the leaders, including Herr Scheidemann and Herr Ebert. The accentuation of submarine warfare was a natural consequence. You Socialists are also guilty because, to the very last, you gave the old regime the credits for carrying on the war." This is a candid and courageous speech, and if it had not been true to the knowledge of those who heard it, it could hardly have been uttered at all. We have evidence then that the Minority Socialists thought and spoke not only of the unrestricted U-boat campaign, but of all submarine war as morally guilty,

while the Majority Socialists are said to have shared in the guilt, not because they approved of what was being done, but because they had not the resolution to enforce their view by threatening to refuse war credits. No one need condemn them too heavily for that: the German Government in the first three years of the war had the whip-hand of any minority. And the important point for us is not what the Socialists did, but what they felt and are feeling now. There are signs, too, that they were not alone in their view. When the unrestricted U-boat campaign was at last decided upon and proclaimed by the titular War Lord, the support which he received from non-military individuals was evidently very limited. It was not even expected to be satisfactory, for Hindenburg and Ludendorff ordered factitious messages to be sent, and were actually responsible for a great proportion of the total number received. Lastly, we know of several men of mark in Germany who, though not Socialists or politicians, held, and held up to their countrymen, the ideals for which we were fighting, and condemned the violation of them by Germans. Doctor G. F. Nicolai, Professor of Physiology in the University of Berlin, may or may not be a typical German, but it may well be hoped that he speaks for some besides himself in his book on *The Biology of the War*. He insists that in rejecting considerations of humanity or respect for International Law, Germany was acting in accordance with strict logic. Nevertheless, he deplors the disregard of "these self-imposed limitations, in which men have recognised the principle that there is something higher than the attainment of military objects." Then he indicts his country on three counts:

"When in 1839 the perpetual neutrality of Belgium was proclaimed, Germany and France rendered war against each other more difficult, and they knew from that day forth that at the frontier of this neutral State there stood an insurmountable wall, based upon their own word.

"When in 1856 the Declaration of Paris laid it down that captured ships must be brought before a properly constituted Prize Court, the nations placed a prohibition on the secret sinking of ships.

"When in 1899 the Hague Convention forbade the employment of suffocating or poisonous gases, the nations voluntarily deprived themselves of one of the most serviceable implements of warfare, which technical progress promised to render every day more effective.

"Whatever one may think of the value and significance of such conventions, after they are once concluded all discussion of them must cease, for henceforth any breach of them not merely damages the enemy, but inflicts irreparable injury on one's honour. Therefore there has been nothing so melancholy in this war as the violation of Belgian neutrality, the U-boat campaign, and the use of suffocating gases. For these things are fatal not only to human life but to human honour."

This is an admirably clear-sighted and courageous pronouncement, eminently satisfactory as far as it goes. But it does not go the whole way with us: it upholds our ideal of good faith and obedience to law rather than our conception of humanity. The ruthlessness which Dr. Nicolai condemns "inflicts," he says, "an injury on the perpetrator"; but that injury is an injury not to his feelings of pity for other human beings, but to his regard for his own stainless reputation



in the eyes of the world. There is a wide difference between him and the national leaders upon this point, because while they viewed offers of peace and claims to humanity as useful means to conciliate opinion, he is protesting instinctively and out of the depth of a sincere emotion. But it is not the same emotion as ours. The English are an old and strong nation: their character has shown for centuries a vein, not merely of kindness, but of pitifulness, a recognition that weakness and pain, to which all mankind are liable, must always make claim on the strong for tenderness even amidst the insanities of war. On the whole, it would seem that we must not reckon on finding any large part of the German race at one with us in this matter; they cannot have this wisdom, for it is too profound to be reached by theory, and the instinct is deficient. Our best hope must lie in the power of intimacy. What cannot be implanted by force of argument may still be communicated, as the qualities of one friend are insensibly acquired by another.

Another point upon which we may well reflect still more deeply is the wide division between the German and the English peoples in their habit of thought, or rather in their habitual way of dealing with those matters which come before them for decision. The methodical German way is wholly antagonistic to the English nature. It is probable that we should ourselves gain by acquiring some touch of it; it is certain that by so doing we should put ourselves into a far better position for making our own mental habits intelligible and sympathetic to them. We are apt to depreciate clear and methodical thinking because it is the way of a slower and less developed nature. In matter of detail, and in all

matters which are not spiritual, and therefore to us not of the first importance, we are apt to act wastefully or ineffectually because we have not taken the trouble to begin by thinking clearly. We run the further risk by this carelessness of condemning too hastily anything which is at the same time surprising and disagreeable to us. We should do better in war if we worked our problems out more thoroughly in advance, just as the Germans would have done better if they could have exchanged part of their superfluity of preparation for a share of British presence-of-mind and practical resource. There is now no need to inquire which nation has more to learn here from the other: but in profounder matters we may believe that our method of judgement gives better results, and we may hope that our late enemies may come to think so too, for besides the verdict of the civilised world and the issue of a great war directly in point, they have also against them the admission and the complaints of some of their own most trusted leaders. Ready as they all are to appeal to logic when it serves their purpose, they revolt at times against the bonds of reason and exclaim, as Grand-Admiral von Tirpitz exclaims, when off his guard, against the fatally doctrinaire habit of the German mind. It is at such moments that we positively like our most inveterate and deliberate enemy, for then he seems to come within, at any rate, a possible distance of passing into the world where men are more than thinking machines and escape fallacious conclusions because they value right premises more highly than correctness of logical form. The English mind lives and moves habitually in this world. It is never prepared to accept theory in place of judgement, and however careless it may be

in more superficial affairs, when it has to go into deeper matters, matters which concern our peace, it is the master of an intuitive power by far more accurate than any more mechanical process.

The profound importance of this distinction cannot be over-estimated, for it gave rise to the true and clearly perceived issue of this war. Writer after writer, speaker after speaker among the Germans has explained the logical process by which they justified the war and all its methods to their own satisfaction, and, as we have seen, even when the justification was not to their satisfaction, they have still felt bound to insist that it was strictly logical. Yet even while he proclaims this, Nicolai is destroying the whole cogency of the German logic by stating his conviction, which is also ours, that "there is something higher than the attainment of military objects." He could not possibly have used words more directly to our point. Let us look once more at the Treitschke syllogism. The power of the German State is the highest good of mankind. This or that act conduces to that power. It is therefore "a brave act, a good deed, and is fully justified." Such a train of reasoning satisfied not only Major-General von Ditfurth, but the vast majority of his fellow-countrymen. It would evidently have satisfied Dr. Nicolai himself if he had not perceived what every Englishman would know without perceiving it, that the major premise on which it is founded is wholly untrue, and that both it and the conclusion are absurd or monstrous, because they are wholly at variance with the very nature of human life. A world order can never be founded upon the belief that the power of any single state is the highest good of mankind,



because in the first place the proposition is untrue in itself, and in the second place it will be differently interpreted by every nation, for none will believe that its own highest good lies in its forcible domination by another. The power whose arrogance or logic blinds it to the perception of this obvious truth will always be defeated in the end by the rest of mankind. The power which knows this truth by instinct and by tradition will survive every great international conflict because its survival is the interest of all. The English national temper, as Sir Walter Raleigh has said, is better fitted for traffic with the world than any mere doctrine can ever be, for it is marked by an immense tolerance. Let us ask our German friends to set these words beside those in which Treitschke, Bernhardi, and others have stated their theories of "the noble state," or those in which Naumann prefers militarism to Christian service as the foundation of all order and prosperity: can they as reasonable men, or even as logical thinkers, expect the majority of men, who after all are not Germans, to accept a theory, however mechanically complete, in place of all those natural desires and ideals which have inspired them since the dawn of history? Let us appeal to their recollection of their own past and invite them to examine the internal causes of their own failure in this war. Is it not true, as we hope, and as a distinguished German<sup>1</sup> has lately told us, that the Germany of 1914, the Kaiser's Germany, was not in the truest sense a nation at all, but a disintegrated people which had neither strength to remain true to its hereditary genius nor strength to take a resolute leave of it? "It was the fearful

<sup>1</sup> Hermann Bahr, in a letter to the *London Mercury* for June 1920.

position of the German thinkers and poets at the outbreak of the war that this Germany had become nobody's Fatherland: it was no longer the old Germany—neither that of old Fritz nor that of Goethe and the Romantic school, nor that of Bismarck—but it was also not the new Germany, the Germany of the merchant princes. It was neither a Germany of heroes, nor a Germany of thinkers, nor a Germany of traders, and just because it could not decide upon a definite policy it pleased nobody. And for this Germany, which was nobody's Fatherland, all had to take their places as soldiers, for it was the raw material out of which all hoped one day to shape their Fatherland. They went to war hoping to find in it a way to make a Fatherland." Into this chaos of raw material the Kaiser and his Militarists thought to bring order and unanimity by informing it with the logic which we have already analysed. They proclaimed that for Germans victory is an end in itself and justifies any method used to attain it. May we not hope that a nation so defeated may think it worth while to consider the source of that unanimity and that strength upon which their attack was broken? Is it not worth while to note that we of the Western civilisation, who have been true nations for a thousand years before the German amalgamation of 1870, have found their theory so opposed to our instincts and our experience that we can only understand it by an effort, and could never take it seriously until we were compelled to put its practice under restraint? To us it has always seemed clear that the end in view for all communities of men is human welfare, that all such communities have rights alike, and that if victory for any one nation can only be achieved by

ruining and corrupting human life, then we must do without victory. This will often mean that we must forgo the use of our physical superiority ; we must treat peaceably with our neighbours though we have the power to end the discussion by brute force, we must keep our treaties, and respect the rights of small states ; in short, in public as in private life we must see that the weak do not suffer injustice from the strong ; and for this reason, that otherwise the world will be destroyed as a place for men to live in, and not even the strongest will have gained anything worth having. This was the danger that threatened Europe in the Dark Ages, and it was to meet it that chivalry arose : a creed then somewhat obscured by associations of privilege and pageantry, but in modern times more clearly visible in its spiritual simplicity. It forms a part, and a very important part, of that reconciliation of the struggling activity of the world with the spirit of Christianity—the reconciliation of which Naumann despaired, and which was renounced by the German people for the intoxication of power. This ideal may not find in the German nature its native soil of tolerance or pity, but it may find a seed-bed in the love of service. In the late war, as we have seen, the Germans, though divided in ideals, were united in their readiness to serve : if they could overcome contradictions so violent, it may be that even the effort of Christian service, the service of mankind, may not be beyond their strength. They have too long been misled into confusing two opposites—service and slavery.

There is one last consideration, which may not even now have occurred to some of them. We may state it frankly, as one friend to another, because it is a



fundamental and unalterable fact in the situation and one upon which we cannot even offer to meet an opponent half way. The rule of kindliness, of tolerance, of recognition of the rights, the freedom and the merits of other peoples, is so inborn and ingrained both in the feeling and the thought of this nation that there can never be more than a small minority among us who would act or permit others to act upon a contrary principle. It would be in vain for us to hold out to the Germans any hope of a compromise. If the world is to be a tolerable place, and we greatly desire that it shall be a tolerable place, we can accept no theory for our guidance but that which is intelligible to even the simplest among us, in our proverbial expression, "Live and let live." We may laugh at an individual or perhaps on occasion at a small nation, but we cannot believe that their very existence is "ludicrous" or "pernicious," because we know that to them, as to us, existence is a share of the world's life, granted to all and serious for all alike. To many of us there are subtler beliefs built on this, but we put this forward because it is fundamental and covers other feelings of which we find it less easy to speak. All this the German may understand if he will spend upon our psychology one-thousandth part of the laborious analysis which he has applied to our language. From a practical point of view the effort will be the more worth while if it is coupled with an appreciation of the historical fact that whenever any Power has attempted to put in practice a theory of world-domination, the British race has been quick to recognise the meaning of the challenge: and that in every such war, though we have lost many battles, yet we have invariably, and in the nature of things inevitably, won the last.

## CHAPTER VII

### BRITISH SUBMARINE WAR

#### 1. THE STANDARD OF EFFICIENCY

A BELIEF in the superiority of their own men is common to all high-spirited nations, and no Englishman of the right kind could feel offended at tracing this disposition in our opponents. But a blind belief in anything is not the highest possible attitude of the mind, and from any point of view, scientific or spiritual, men or nations are better equipped for life in proportion as they have the power of perceiving and profiting by the evidences of their own inferiority. It may be due to the enormous importance of the submarine war to our enemies and not entirely to original conceit on their part, but there can be no doubt in the mind of any one who studies the records now available that they considerably over-estimated their own submarine service. The fact is that the qualities displayed by the Germans in their U-boat campaign were, from the professional point of view, less than first-rate, and by no means such as to enable them to stand a comparison with those of our own men. This is not, of course, to say that the seamanship, the mechanical skill, or the courage of the U-boat officers were in any way to be despised. Submarine warfare is in all circumstances a dangerous and, at times, a very difficult business.

Setting apart all question of humanity, the Germans had no doubt good ground to feel pride, if not complete confidence, in the conduct of their submarine service : and Admiral Scheer has professed his own satisfaction in generous terms. " During the first months," he says, " of the U-boat campaign, I never missed an opportunity of hearing the story of his experiences and adventures direct from the lips of the commander of a returning U-boat, and thus I had opportunity to form an idea of the perseverance, courage, and resolution of these young officers, who won my highest admiration for the seamanship and calm intrepidity, which they succeeded in communicating to the crew as well. It is a splendid testimonial to the spirit of the Navy that all who could possibly be considered suitable for the U-boat service, both officers and men, rushed to offer themselves. Even older Staff officers, in spite of their many years of service, begged to be taken as commanders of U-boats, even if they had to serve under a flotilla commander younger than themselves."

This is more enthusiastic than accurate, for it is written since the war ended, and Admiral Scheer must have known, as we know from captured crews, that in 1918, though officers continued to volunteer, men had to be " detailed " for the submarine service, and dreaded and resented it. Altogether the Admiral's praise is of a general kind, such as would probably be applicable to the personnel of any nation which possesses a submarine flotilla. But no naval officer could be content with what may fairly be described as a minimum standard for a service in war-time, and Admiral Scheer naturally attempts to justify his admiration by details, dwelling especially upon the difficulties encountered by the U-boats and quoting



from the official reports of their commanders. The example upon which he particularly relies is that of the U 53, whose journey to America he quotes as "a splendid testimonial to the perseverance of the crew and the high quality of the *matériel*." U 53 started from Heligoland on her trans-Atlantic voyage on the 17th September 1916, and was to make the return journey without replenishing any supplies except provisions. The difficulties complained of were heavy weather, the strain of duty on the bridge in rubber suits that had to be worn almost daily at first but were not watertight: and the health of the crew, who suffered during the later part of the voyage from headache and sickness, "which is said to be a common occurrence in these parts." The return journey was made in very favourable conditions of weather and wind, and the boat entered the harbour at Heligoland on October 28, having covered a distance of 7550 sea miles out and back. This is a long voyage, or rather two long voyages, but the difficulties encountered were hardly war-time difficulties. The crossing of the Atlantic by an armed submarine boat is unique in the history of the German Navy but not of the British: on one occasion a whole class of our submarines crossed the Atlantic during the war without regarding it as a feat. The double voyage goes down to the credit of the Germans, but it demanded no such technical efficiency or perfection of *matériel*, and involved no such dangers or daring as the expeditions hereafter to be recorded into the narrow and distant waters of the Baltic and the Dardanelles.

Lieutenant-Commander Rose and his U 53 are evidently regarded by Admiral Scheer as national models. He pursues their adventures during the

following January and February when the boat was cruising in the Channel. Her difficulties were now more considerable. By using her wireless she betrayed her whereabouts, and when she was sinking her first ship, British searchlights gave her so much trouble that she had to leave her victim without observing whether it actually sank or not. It was constantly necessary to avoid "Foxgloves" and other enemies: and torpedoes could not be fired at night or in a high sea. Then we hear of a failure of *matériel*. When Commander Rose is attacking the *Housatonic* on February 3 the first torpedo sticks in the tube, and finally sinks to the bottom and detonates under the U-boat. The steamer is afterwards sunk by a torpedo from the fourth tube. The night of February 4 is extraordinarily light and darkened guardships have to be avoided. On February 5 the *Bravalla*, with nuts for Liverpool, is met with. The ruthless campaign not having yet begun she could not be sunk on the spot because it would be impossible for her boats to be towed in such a high sea. Commander Rose therefore signals her to "Follow," but when he adds, "I am going to sink you," she refuses to take further notice of him and he has "to force the steamer to obedience again." His signal "Abandon ship" is also disregarded and it is necessary to fire upon her. Then when the boats are hove-to and he tries to sink the ship by renewed gun-fire, it is difficult to aim owing to the rolling of boat and target in a very heavy hail squall. Finally the steamer, though at last hit several times, obstinately refuses to sink and a guardship opens fire on the U-boat, which is compelled to dive. She sticks to her work, however, with heroic perseverance, and while the guardship is busy rescuing the

*Bravalla's* Swedish crew she succeeds in sinking the empty steamer by a torpedo.

"These extracts," says Admiral Scheer, "show under what difficulties the boats worked so long as they had to consider the neutrality of steamers," and they also show how many opportunities for sinking ships in the blockade areas were lost. He then quotes from other logs to illustrate other kinds of U-boat activities.

The next of these extracts is from the log of a U.C.-boat which had orders to lay mines along the east coast of England. Her captain, after spending a whole day in diving to avoid possible enemies, found himself in a line of traffic and within sight of a breakwater. The pilot thought he could recognise this as the entrance to the Tyne. It was decided to make for the northern breakwater, but in so doing the boat was run aground, both engines were reversed under full steam, and she eventually slipped off, laid her mines, and set out to sea. It is difficult to understand what this simple narrative proves to Admiral Scheer, but it is interesting to us because it is dated December 1916, and marks a considerable advance on the attempts of the early days of the war when the German mine-layers sent out on the same errand failed to reach our harbour mouths and, for reasons of their own, dropped their mines in the open sea more than thirty miles from the territorial waters for which they were intended. They did not report this, unfortunately; for the German Admiralty afterwards made the mistake of supposing that it was we and not they who first laid mines in the open sea.

The next example shown is the log of U 82 which complains of destroyer attacks, and shows therefore



“how much more difficult it was for our U-boats to attack when the steamers travelled in convoys.” U.B. 64 and U 54 are then shown attacking the *Justitia* on July 19, 1918, and eventually sinking her on the 20th. The difficulties here came from the zigzagging of the convoy and the protective action of submarine chasers and destroyers, some of which passed over the U.B. 64 several times and dropped depth-charges which damaged her oil bunkers so that she left a broad track of oil. U 54 suffered more severely. On rising to the surface her commander opened the conning-tower hatch prematurely; the helmsman was blown out, and his own arm so crushed that he fainted. After this he abandoned the pursuit, but was happy to hear next day that the big ship had finally succumbed to his first torpedo. Every one will agree that although a 32,000-ton ship is not the most difficult mark at sea, nor the most easy convoy to protect efficiently, this two-day chase was good hunting and fair sport. It is unfortunate that for reasons of policy Admiral Scheer has in this case failed to do justice to the daring of his own men, for he has omitted the most conclusive proof of the risks they ran. One of the U-boats engaged in this attack paid the penalty of her boldness. A depth-charge dropped close to her exploded with such violence that she was severely shaken and her plates parted. Thereupon her electric batteries were flooded with seawater, chlorine gas was given off, and the boat was instantly forced to the surface. A destroyer and two other boats sighted her at once. Though the range was over 7000 yards, she was speedily hit and so seriously injured that her captain and crew abandoned her. The first officer and engineer were left aboard

to sink her, but before they were able to do so a second shell found her; her bows immediately rose high out of the water, and she sank stern first. By concealing these facts, Admiral Scheer has made his narrative less convincing than it might have been.

His concluding example is the fight of U 84 with a Q-boat which she had missed with a torpedo. The steamer unmasked four guns and hit the submarine's conning-tower five times, following up when she dived with depth-charges from her boats. The injured U-boat, finding it impossible to remain under water, came to the surface and tried her guns, at the same time running from a Foxglove which had approached. The pursuer got within 7000 yards. It was then partially disabled, and Lieutenant-Commander Röhr succeeded in spite of his severe damage in reaching home. This, too, was a good fight from the point of view of both captain and crew, but there was nothing exceptional about it except the good luck of the gunner who pierced the Foxglove's boiler. It is remarkable that Admiral Scheer should have been unable to find among the logs of the 360 U-boats which he admits he commissioned a greater number of convincing records than the meagre half-dozen which he has quoted.

Upon reflection, however, the reason of this is plain. German submarine commanders were of two classes, those who could claim by their own standard some measure of success, and those whose record was one of failure. Of the first class the greater number perished, with their boats. It will be remembered that during the unrestricted U-boat campaign the British Admiralty published the names of the commanding officers of 150 German submarines which

had already been destroyed. Of those officers 116 were dead, 27 prisoners of war, 6 were interned in neutral countries where they took refuge; one only had succeeded in returning to Germany, but naturally without his log. The list of dead included the names of Otto Weddigen who sank the three *Cressys*, of Rudolf Schneider who torpedoed the *Arabic*, of Schwieger who drowned the women and children in the *Lusitania* and afterwards lost two submarines and his own life, of Herbert Pustkuchen who sank the *Sussex*, of Paul Wagenfuhr who sank the *Belgian Prince* and afterwards drowned forty of her crew when prisoners of war. It is true that one or two who were especially distinguished for sinking hospital ships seemed to have survived, but Admiral Scheer evidently found it difficult to include their feats among the examples of dangerous and difficult service. The records that remained to him were therefore mainly records of failure, and they must have formed an overwhelming proportion of the whole. According to Admiral Koch the number of active U-boats during the first nine months of the unrestricted campaign averaged more than 125, of which 49 were destroyed. During the following ten months the active average rose to 127, and the additional losses were over 70. We are able to judge of the reports brought home by the survivors from evidence of several kinds. The diary of the commander of U.C. 29 captured off Havre in May 1917 is merely a prolonged wail over the defects of his boat and his own seamanship. A still fuller example is the information given by the crew of U.C. 61, which ran ashore at Wissant in July 1917. U.C. 61 was commissioned in December 1916 at the Weser yard, Bremen, but her trials and preliminary



cruises were not completed till two months later. On February 25 she left Heligoland for Zeebrugge and Bruges. After this she made four cruises and was lost during the fifth. The first cruise was made without mines, off the Dutch coast, and was merely a trial trip. The second took place about the middle of March, but lasted only seven days on account of serious damage incurred in running wildly from a British destroyer. At the moment when the chase began the stuffing-boxes of the U-boat's two crankshafts were not tight, and were leaking considerably. To dive in this condition was dangerous, but she had no choice: if she remained on the surface she would be probably rammed and certainly shelled. Down she went, and in such a hurry that she reached a depth of 197 feet before she could be stopped: the flow of water from the stuffing-boxes increased to a serious extent under the heavy pressure. Another panic rush brought her back to the surface with her bows up at a sharp angle: there she was greeted by a sloop, whose gunners drove her down again with all speed. This time the accumulation of water in her stern rushed forward into her bows as she dived, and her electric motors were completely fused. She rolled about under water till night, which happily for her was not long in coming; but her commander on bringing her at last to the surface found that the motors were absolutely useless, and all he could do was to take her back to Zeebrugge. As he could not travel submerged, this was a three days' voyage: he had the luck to escape without being further attacked, but his cruise was a dismal failure. He had not fired a gun or a torpedo: he had not even laid a mine.

The boat's injuries and defects were repaired at

Ostend : one of the motors was replaced by a new one, and the other was drained after unwinding the armature. All this took six or seven weeks. When at last she was able to start on her third cruise she made even worse weather of it. She was barely clear of Zeebrugge when she damaged her rudder so badly that she had to return at once and go into dock at Ostend again.

In the fourth cruise she tasted blood at last. During the sixteen or eighteen days she was out she laid mines here and there, tried the Bay of Biscay, which made her sick, and then came over to the English coast. Her crew's account of their bag could not be absolutely believed : the submarine is more liable than the ordinary sportsman to exaggeration in this matter, if only because she is herself being hunted all the time, and has no time to verify doubtful shots. However, one thing was admitted ; only two torpedoes were fired, and both missed.

U.C. 61 left Zeebrugge for her fifth cruise at 1 P.M. on July 25. Her orders were to pass through the British barrage as best she could, to lay mines off Boulogne and Le Havre, and then to continue cruising, probably along the Atlantic coast. The barrage was successfully passed that night by a method which it is useful for our Navy to know, but which need not delay us here. The boat's luck did not last long : the weather was very thick, and by daybreak catastrophe was upon her. At 4.20 A.M. she jerked several times and stranded in the open seas : the commanding officer thought he had run aground on the Basseuse de Baas, and it was only later, when the fog lifted, that he saw where he was. His boat lay not on a shelving bank from which he

might hope to back her off into deep water, but on a flat sandy bottom, where she was practically moored fore, aft, and amidships. Of the hours of energetic misery which followed there is nothing to be said, except that they were desperate, unsuccessful, and at last unendurable. The unhappy commander put his surface motors to full speed ahead, then to full speed astern, but in vain. He tried to lighten the craft, fired the two torpedoes in the bow tubes, and hove most of his shells overboard ; but again U.C. 61 failed to respond. In growing apprehension—for at any moment the hunters might be upon him—he coupled the electric machines to the motors and called upon her for a final effort. He might as well have been spurring a horse dead bogged on Exmoor : he saw it, blew up his ship, and waded off to surrender to the French authorities, who had no doubt been watching the struggles of the dangerous beast with anxious enthusiasm. Examples of this kind help us to understand the enormous discrepancy between Admiral von Capelle's return of " front or active " submarines and the number which were, in fact, efficient. Captain Persius has informed us that in January 1917, when conditions were favourable for submarine work, only 12 per cent were active, while 30 per cent were in harbour, 38 per cent under repairs, and 20 per cent incapacitated. The submarine crews, he adds, were not sufficiently educated or trained, and they looked with distrust upon the weapon. Latterly, indeed, it was very difficult to get men for the submarines, as experienced seamen looked upon U-boat warfare as a political stupidity. On another occasion the same writer gave an extract from the diary of the commander of a U-boat which had been



operating in the English Channel. It is dated January 1918, and the commander says that out of ninety-eight ships he met he was only able to sink seven steamers and one sailing ship. Captain Persius's own comment is : " Of course this young man never sank the ships he claimed, but he hoped for decorations." The German Navy, from the Grand-Admiral downwards, seems to have placed considerable reliance on the idealisation of facts. The truth appears to be that a successful campaign against warships proved, from the beginning, to be beyond the power of the U-boats ; that the business of sinking merchantmen, liners, neutrals, and hospital ships, though much easier, was only accomplished by the expenditure of an enormous number of torpedoes and mines, eked out by a lavish use of gun-fire and explosive or incendiary charges ; and that when real difficulties appeared in the various shapes of the British counter-attack, the successes of the U-boats fell rapidly and their cruises became increasingly fatal to themselves. It was the opinion of American naval officers engaged in the war that the standard of efficiency of the German Submarine Service compared with that of the British Service as 2 to 3, and it must be remembered that this refers only to technical efficiency, and does not take into account the really important differences of circumstance between the two services. Our submarine commanders were, from first to last, strictly limited both in theory and practice by the tradition of the sea and the rules of international law, while their possible targets included only an extraordinarily small number of unarmed vessels ; whereas the German U-boat officer was restricted neither in numbers nor in choice, nor in his method

of dealing with his victims. In one respect only the two services may be compared as equals. The officers and men of both were in their widely different ways above the fear of death. It is in this sense, but only in this limited sense, that we can accept the statement of Admiral Scheer that "wherever in this war heroism is spoken of, it applies without exception to the U-boat commanders and their crews." His estimate of German and British efficiency we cannot accept at all, because it is based, as we have seen, on an unscientific arrangement of his own evidence and a remarkable indifference to ours. This indifference is shared by Tirpitz and his expert subordinate Commander Bartenbach. They are apparently still of the opinion that the sojourn in German waters of British submarines was, at the end of 1914, limited to four days and later to six days, "from which one can judge of their capacity for long-distance service. Some of them went to Russia. . . . As we heard later in Helsingfors, where they were sunk, their motors were very unreliable, and burst as often as the Russians." "After such a comparison," he continues, "it is not to be wondered at that the English, as a result of their own experience, believed it to be impossible for our submarines to penetrate into the Irish Sea. Our enemies were completely taken by surprise by the performances of our submarines." These are hypothetical statements based on ignorance, natural enough in time of war, but hardly excusable after a year of peace and the publication in England of many accurate records. They are best answered by a few simple figures. In two years the submarine Commodore, at the single port of Harwich, organised 370 cruises, lasting in all 1680 days and extending

over a surface mileage of more than 200,000 miles. There was only a single breakdown, and that ended in a success, for the commander got himself towed back by an enemy trawler, neatly captured for the purpose. Another—Commander Talbot—made 21 cruises; Lieut. C. Turner, 19; Commanders Goodhart and Leir, 17 each; Commander Benning and Lieut. C. Moncreiffe, 16. The first two of these officers spent 56 and 65 days respectively in enemy waters, and the other four from 36 to 49 days each. Commander Leir was repeatedly in action with Zeppelins, seaplanes, and anti-submarine craft, one of which he sank. He was present at the action in the Heligoland Bight in August 1914 and brought home some German prisoners. Commander Benning was also repeatedly in action. Once, after torpedoing an armed auxiliary cruiser, he was forced by enemy sweepers to dive into a German mine-field. There he had to stay, with batteries exhausted, till night gave him a chance of recharging. Another time he went down into a mine-field of his own will, to lie in wait for an armed auxiliary. He was there for three hours, and ambushed her successfully in the end, close to the German coast. Lieut. - Commander Turner covered 20,000 miles to his own score, and passed much of his time actually in the swept channels, with enemy patrols in sight the whole day. Sometimes he came up and fought them, sometimes they hunted him with depth-charges. Of the fifty British submarines sunk in the war a large proportion were lost in the North Sea, and it must be remembered that this patrol work, off a shallow and heavily mined coast where none but armed and hostile ships could be met with, was far more arduous work



than the ambushing of merchantmen, neutrals, and hospital ships. Finally, besides all the routine work of our long east coast, our submarine service carried out two separate campaigns, the history of which deserves to be told in detail, from the original documents, without exaggeration and without any politic suppressions.

## 2. THE BALTIC SUBMARINE CAMPAIGN

The story of our submarine campaign in the Baltic is the first of two romances of the sea—one Northern and one Southern—the like of which is not to be found in the annals of the last three hundred years. War must often make us familiar with obscure or long-forgotten places, the scenes of old voyages and battles long ago; but to adventure with our submarines into the Baltic or the Sea of Marmora is to slip through unimagined dangers into a legendary world beyond all history—sailing the seas of the past, with the captains of the future. The exploration under water of those intricate and perilous channels was alone a discovery of supreme skill and daring, and the brilliant acts of war achieved by the adventurers form only a minor part of the glory of being there at all.

The first of our submarine voyagers in the Baltic was Lieut.-Commander Max Horton, in E 9. Before the war was a year old his fame had spread far and wide; but the details of his success are not even yet generally known. By October 6, 1914, he had sunk a German light cruiser and a destroyer, both in the North Sea, and it may perhaps be guessed that he had, at any rate, thought of penetrating into the

Baltic. By January 1915 he was a full Commander and had received the D.S.O. On the 29th of that month he was not only in the Baltic, but was sinking a destroyer there ; on May 11 he bagged a transport ; and on June 5 he put to the credit of E 9 another transport and another destroyer. Finally, on July 2 he torpedoed the *Pommern*, a 13,000-ton battleship of an older type, but armed with 11-inch guns.

On July 29 he slipped again, in company with E 1 (Commander N. F. Laurence), and after some independent hunting the two boats both arrived at Reval. E 9 had attacked a cruiser and a submarine ; and on August 18 had had a covetous look at a squadron of battle-cruisers detailed for the German attack on the Gulf of Riga. But as they were moving constantly in regular formation and at high speed over a large area, it was not possible to deal satisfactorily with them. E 1, however, had had better luck. On August 19 Commander Laurence came to observation depth at 8 A.M., and under cover of a fog succeeded in stalking the same squadron. They were manœuvring in line abreast, and within ten minutes came across E 1's bows, with destroyers on both flanks. Commander Laurence had, of course, only a single ship to aim at—the battle-cruiser on the wing nearest to him, which was ascertained to have been the *Moltke*, a 22,600-ton ship. At 8.20 he fired his starboard torpedo, and at the same moment dived to avoid a destroyer which was coming straight for him. His luck was good both ways. The torpedo got home on the battle-cruiser, and the destroyer missed E 1 by a few feet. The next day he reported to the Russian Admiral at Reval.

These two boats were followed, on August 15, by

E 8 and E 13. The fate of E 13 will not be forgotten while there is any rightful indignation left in Europe. On August 19 she got ashore on a neutral coast—the Danish island of Saltholm—and there, with her crew upon her, was deliberately shot to pieces by a German warship, in defiance of all humanity and international law. Her officers and men behaved with perfect courage, but many of them were killed before they could get away from the wreck of their boat.

Lieut.-Commander Goodhart's account of the voyage of E 8 is a plain and business-like document, but to read it, with a map beside it, is to look far away into a world of historic names and ever-present dangers. It is easy enough to imagine the passage up the Skagerak, always remembering that we must keep well out of the central line of traffic, and that in the afternoon we have to dive and pass under a whole fleet of steam-tractors. At 7 P.M. it is possible to come to the surface again. The Commander orders full speed, rounds the Skaw, and enters the Kattegat. In the fading twilight several merchant-steamers are seen going north. The shore and island lights twinkle out one by one—Hamnskar, Vinga, Skaw, Trindelen, and Anholt. The night is short. By 3 A.M. we must dive again, and lie quietly on shoal ground, while the traffic goes over us. At 5.25 A.M. we venture to the surface, but are put down quickly by a steamer. At 7 we venture again, and do a scurry of one and a half hours in a friendly mist. Then down again, and crawl at three knots, till at 1 P.M. we are off the entrance to the Sound.

Here Commander Goodhart has to make the choice between going forward submerged and waiting for



darkness and then attempting the channel on the surface. He is confident of being able to get to his position under water, and decides accordingly to continue diving into the Sound and wait for night inside. He proceeds at fifty feet, and by 3.6 P.M. has verified his position, coming up to twenty-one feet to do so. He goes down again to fifty feet, and alters course to pass through the northern narrows. At 4.10 P.M. he is east of Helsingör Light—"By thy wild and stormy steep, Elsinore!" At 5.20, after another observation, he goes to bottom in eleven fathoms, feeling comfortably certain that he has not been detected, so far, on his passage.

At 8.15 P.M. he rises to the surface. The Danish shore is bright with many lights, the Swedish shore is dark—all is exactly as it may have been a century and more ago when Nelson was there on his way to his great battle. E 8 goes south-westward on the surface, altering course to avoid being seen by two destroyers who are going north, along the Danish shore, at a great pace. One of them suddenly turns south, but then stops, as if in doubt. E 8 runs on into still more dangerous waters; the lights of Copenhagen are blazing brightly, and in Middle Ground Fort a searchlight is working. Now and again it strikes the submarine. Then come several fishing-boats, then two red lights in a small craft going south, close over to the Danish shore. She is on our starboard beam for some time, but luckily not near enough to see us, and we head boldly for Flint Channel.

Off Malmö the shore lights are dazzling, and it is extremely hard to fix a position. There are many fishing-boats about, each carrying two bright lights. The Commander orders the boat to be trimmed down,

with upper deck awash, and proceeds with one engine only at seven knots. He steadies his course through Flint Channel, passing at least twenty vessels towards the western end of it, some carrying two and some three white lights, and one making searchlight signals in the air. The majority of the fishing-boats are no sooner avoided by a change of course, than we run past a small tramp showing a green light and then three white ones. She seems to have anchored ; but two other vessels have to be dodged, and then the ship which has been signalling with searchlight. Immediately afterwards, when just N.E. of the Lightship, with her three vertical red lights, a small torpedo-boat or trawler sights us as we creep by within two hundred yards of her. Probably it is the searchlight in Copenhagen which has shown us up. Anyhow it is tally-ho at last !

She lights red and green flares and alters course in our direction. We dive and strike bottom—"very strong bottom"—at nineteen feet on gauge, which immediately decreases to fourteen feet. At fourteen feet, then, we try to proceed on our course, but the ground is fearfully uneven, and a succession of bumps brings us to a dead stop. It is 11.40 P.M. After an anxious quarter of an hour the Commander rises to the surface. The Drogden Lightship is on our star-board quarter. A large destroyer or small cruiser is ahead of us, showing lights—she is the one who had made searchlight signals. She is only two hundred yards away, but the Commander trims E 8 deep and steals past on motors. Four minutes this takes, and we then find a destroyer right ahead, and only one hundred yards from us. There is nothing for it but to dive. Down we go to twenty-three feet on gauge,

but at sixteen feet the boat strikes bottom heavily on the starboard side, carrying away all blades of the starboard propeller. We lie on the bottom and listen to our pursuers overhead.

Life is now a matter of minutes and feet. At 12.15 the boat goes down to eighteen feet, but is still bumping badly. At 12.19 Commander Goodhart stops her and comes silently to the surface. The destroyer is there, close on our starboard beam. At 12.20 we dive again, as slowly as we dare, and at seventeen feet we glide away on our course, the depth of water mercifully increasing as we go. For a long time we seem to be escaping. Then, at 2.10 A.M. we strike bottom again at eighteen feet. An hour more and we rise to the surface, only to see the destroyer on our port beam. Happily she is now a mile off and does not see us. When we come up again at 7.15 there is nothing in sight. At 8.53 we dive for a steamer, and at 10.40 for a destroyer. E 8 is nearly out of breath now—her battery is running very low.

Commander Goodhart decides to find a good depth, go to the bottom, and lie there till darkness gives him a chance of recharging. From 10.40 A.M. till 6.40 P.M. we lie like a stone in twenty-three fathoms.

At 6.40 a Swedish steamer is still patrolling ahead. At 8.25 P.M. a patrol of three vessels is close astern, and very slowly moving east. The moon is too bright for us and we dive again. At 9.30 we try once more, but are put down by a shadowy destroyer to the southward. At last, ten minutes before midnight we find a bit of sea where we and the boat can breathe in peace.

But only for two hours ; daylight comes early in



northern waters. It is now August 20. At 2 A.M. we dive again, and lie in seventeen fathoms, spending time and imagination upon the chart. We are well out of the Sound now, and clear of the Swedish coast. On our starboard beam lies the island of Rügen, where we shall never make holiday again ; farther back, on our quarter, is the channel that leads to Lübeck and to Kiel, which we hope to visit yet. Right ahead is the island of Bornholm, which we must pass unperceived, and beyond it the whole expanse of the Baltic lies open.

Commander Goodhart rises to the surface at 9 A.M., but dives again at noon. We are now not far west of Rönne ; and as he wishes to make sure of passing Bornholm unobserved, he decides to remain on the bottom till dark, then slip by and recharge his batteries for a long run north by daylight. By 7 P.M. we are on our way, and eight hours later we are passing the east coast of the great island of Gotland. At 9.2 P.M. we dive for a light cruiser, which passes overhead forward ; at 10 we return to the surface and proceed north-east, running past the entrance to the Gulf of Riga and the island of Oesel. By 1 A.M. on August 22 we have to dive for daylight ; but by 3 we are up again, and going on our course full speed. At 8.30 A.M. we sight Dagerört ahead and join E 9 (Commander Max Horton). In company with her and with a Russian destroyer, we pass into the entrance of the Gulf of Finland ; and by 9 P.M. E 8 is secured in Reval harbour. Within twenty-four hours Commander Goodhart has docked and overhauled her, replaced her broken propeller, and reported her ready for sea.

The career of E 8 in the Baltic was long and successful. It began, so far as sinkings are concerned,

# THE BALTIC







with the destruction of the steamer *Margarette* of Königsberg by gun-fire, on October 5, 1915, and the most exciting day in the record was October 23, when the *Prinz Adalbert*, a cruiser of nearly 9000 tons, fell to her first shot. E 8 was cruising off Libau when, at 8.50 A.M., Commander Goodhart observed smoke on the horizon, and altered course to intercept the ship which was soon seen to be an enemy. She had three funnels and two very high masts, and was going west with two destroyers, zigzagging—one on each bow.

Commander Goodhart ran on, at seven and a half knots, till he got within 3000 yards, when he eased to five knots in order to lessen his wake. The wind was slight, from S.S.E., and there was bright sunlight. The conditions were ideal for an attack from the southward. All tubes were made ready; the enemy came on at an estimated speed of fifteen knots. At 9.28 the port destroyer passed ahead; four minutes later Commander Goodhart fired his bow tube at the warship's forebridge and began to look out for results.

They came. After one minute he observed a very vivid flash on the water-line at the point of aim. This was immediately followed by a very heavy concussion, and the entire ship was hidden instantly in a huge column of thick grey smoke. Evidently the torpedo had exploded the fore magazine. The sky was filled with debris, and the smaller bits began falling in the water near the submarine. There was no use in spending time on the surface, and in one minute more E 8 was sliding down to fifty feet, where she stayed for eight minutes, to give the rest of the enemy ship ample time to come down. At 9.42 Commander Goodhart rose to twenty feet and took a survey through his periscope. There was no sign of the *Prinz*

*Adalbert*. The two destroyers had closed on to the scene of the explosion, but it was not likely that they had been able to find any survivors, for the destruction of the ship had been instantaneous and complete. Commander Goodhart decided not to attack them, because, for all he knew, they were ignorant of his presence ; if so, they might very probably imagine the damage to have been done by a mine, and give him further opportunities. The shot had been a long one, about 1300 yards, and this was in the circumstances particularly fortunate ; for at a shorter distance, such as 500 or 600 yards, the submarine herself would have felt a tremendous shock from the double explosion.

An hour later he saw four destroyers hovering about the place of the wreck. He turned away, and they made no attempt to follow. At dawn next day he reported by wireless, and then proceeded to his base.

In the meantime E 19 (Lieut.-Commander F. N. Cromie) had arrived. She set to work in earnest upon the German shipping engaged in the service of the naval and military departments of the enemy, towards the western end of the Baltic. Monday, October 11, was her best day, and the beginning of a downright panic in the Hamburg trade. " 8 A.M.," says Lieut.-Commander Cromie, " started to chase merchant shipping." He had good hunting. At 9.40 A.M. he stopped the *Walter Leonhardt*, from Lulea to Hamburg, with iron ore. The crew abandoned ship, and were picked up by a Swedish steamer, considerably stopped for the purpose. A gun-cotton charge then sent the empty vessel to the bottom. By noon E 19 was chasing the *Germania* of Hamburg, signalling her to stop immediately. In spite of the signals and a warning gun-shot, she continued to bolt, and soon ran

ashore. Lieut.-Commander Cromie went alongside cautiously to save her crew, but found that they had already abandoned ship. He tried to tow her off, but failed to move her—small wonder, for her cargo consisted of nearly three million kgs. of the finest concentrated iron ore, from Stockholm to Stettin. He left her filling with water, and at 2 gave chase to the *Gutrune*. By 3 he had towed her crew to the Swedish steamer, and started her for the bottom with her 4,500,000 kgs. of iron ore, from Lulea to Hamburg.

The game went forward merrily. At 4.25 he began to chase two more large steamers going south. In twenty minutes he had stopped one—the Swedish boat *Nyland*, with ore for Rotterdam and papers all correct—told her to proceed, and ten minutes later caught the *Direktor Rippenhagen*, with magnetic ore, from Stockholm to Nadenheim. While she was sinking he stopped another Swede bound for Newcastle, and gave her the *Direktor's* crew to take care of. An hour later he proceeded to chase a large steamer, the *Nicomedia*, who tried to make off towards the Swedish coast. A shot across her bows brought her to a more resigned frame of mind. She proved to be a large and extremely well-fitted vessel, carrying six to seven million kgs. of magnetic ore from Lulea to Hamburg. The crew were sent ashore in boats, and E 19 proceeded up the west of Gotland. Her cruise was marked by one more incident—a significant one. During the morning of October 12 Lieut.-Commander Cromie stopped the *Nike*, and went alongside to examine her. He found her to be in iron ore from Stockholm to Stettin, under command of Captain Anderson, whose passport, from the Liverpool Police, proved him to be a Swede. To a German this would have made no



difference ; but Lieut.-Commander Cromie had British ideas on international law. He sent Lieutenant Mee on board with a prize crew of two men, in the good old style of our ancestors, and ordered them to take the prize into Reval for further investigation. After what we have already said about submarines and war policy, the point needs no pressing. War against trading vessels and non-combatants is possible within the rules, but only in certain circumstances. Where those circumstances exist, there is no excuse for breaking the rules ; and where they do not exist, no British commander would hack his way through the net of international law and common humanity. Our Navy has in all circumstances kept both these laws : the German submarines deliberately broke both.

Lieut.-Commander Cromie continued to have the good fortune he deserved. He ended the 1915 campaign with another warship in his bag. Cruising in the Western Baltic on the morning of November 7, he sighted a cruiser and two destroyers, but was disappointed in his attempt to attack. Three hours later, at 1.20, in a favourable mist, he had a second chance. A light cruiser—perhaps the same—with one destroyer in attendance, came on at fifteen knots, steaming south and east. He dived at once, and at 1.45 fired his starboard torpedo. The range was about 1100 yards, and the shot went home on the cruiser's starboard side forward. She immediately swung round in a large circle and then stopped dead. She appeared to be on fire and sinking. But Lieut.-Commander Cromie was unwilling to leave her in uncertainty. He avoided the destroyer, passed under her stern, and manœuvred for a second shot. This was fired at 1200 yards, and was aimed at the cruiser's

main-mast, just abaft of which it actually struck. A double explosion followed. Evidently the after magazine had blown up, and several large smoking masses were shot out some 200 yards in the direction of the submarine. The destroyer then opened a heavy fire on the periscope with H.E. shell. Down went E 19 for her life ; but three minutes later she was up again to see what was happening. The cruiser—she was the *Undine* of 2650 tons—was gone. The destroyer was picking up a few survivors, and after a restless half-hour made off to the southward, leaving on the scene only a ferry-boat flying the German mercantile flag. Lieut.-Commander Cromie left also, and arrived next day at Reval, where he reported the attack and added that, under existing weather conditions, it was only rendered possible by the sound judgement and prompt action of Lieutenant G. Sharp, who was officer of the watch at the time.

E 19 was not alone in her successful campaign against the German iron-ore trade. A week after her fine break recorded above, E 9 arrived on the scene ; and Commander Max Horton, in two successive days, sank the *Soderham*, *Pernambuco*, *Johannes-Russ*, and *Dall-Asfen*—four serious losses to the German gun-factories, and even more serious blows to the courage of their carrying trade. The captain of the *Nike* told Lieutenant Mee on his voyage to Reval that after E 19's first raid no less than fifteen ships were held up at Lulea awaiting convoy ; and after E 9's success the command of the Baltic seemed to have passed for the time out of German hands.

Such a state of things could not, of course, be continuously maintained—the Baltic weather alone

made that impossible. E 1, E 8, and E 18 followed their leaders, and all did good service during the autumn ; but their reports show how severe were the conditions when the winter really set in. E 9 had already noted very bad weather in November, and on the 25th "boat became covered with a large quantity of ice." On January 10, 1916, E 18, commanded by Lieut.-Commander R. C. Halahan, reports : "Temperature very low ; sea very rough ; great difficulty in keeping conning-tower hatch clear of ice, as sea came over constantly and froze at once." Two days later she proceeded to Reval in company with a Russian ice-breaker. "The ice was very thick in places, but no difficulty was experienced in getting through." These hindrances continued for months. As late as April 28 we find E 18 accompanied through Moon Sound by an ice-breaker, "as there were occasional thick ice-fields." The next day some of these ice-fields came drifting down upon the anchorage, and E 18 had to slip and anchor off until night. Even so, she could not be sure of escaping all danger, for the ice brought down large masses of stone and deposited them in the channels.

In spite of all difficulties and hardships, our submarines continued their campaign indomitably, and would, no doubt, have continued to hold the mastery of the Baltic trade if the collapse of our Russian friends had not deprived them of their bases and rendered their operations useless. Early in April 1917 it became evident that Finland must fall into German hands, and steps were taken to withdraw our naval force from the Baltic. But, for the boats themselves, there could be no return from the scene of their voyages and victories. They lay ice-bound



in the harbour of Helsingfors, and there they must end their unparalleled story, for surrender to an enemy was not to be thought of.

As soon, then, as official news came of the landing of German troops at Hango, these famous adventurers were led to their last rendezvous. The Russian ice-breakers freed them from the harbour ice. All the Russian officers who had been attached to the British flotilla, and who were then in Helsingfors, offered their assistance for the funeral rites, and soon after midday Lieutenant Basil Downie, the officer in command of the submarine depot, put to sea in E 1, followed by E 9, E 8, and E 19. Each boat carried her death potion in the form of torpedo warheads, with a 20-lb. dry cotton charge as primer. Three of these charges were allotted to each—one forward, one aft, and one amidships; and when the alarm-bell of the clock in each should ring, contact would be made and the end would come. The point decided on was reached at last. The bells rang, and E 19, E 1, and E 9 sank to their own thunder. E 8, by some failure of her clock, remained unhurt, and since the ice-breaker could not stay out at sea longer, she was left to die another day, with other comrades. At 7 next morning Lieutenant Downie put to sea again with C 26 and C 35 and the torpedo-barge, with the remaining stores. When the clocks rang this time, E 8 sank, and C 26 with her. The barge and C 35 were left to wait for C 27, the last of that victorious company. On the following morning the barge was blown up, and the two submarines were simply sunk in fifteen fathoms. They went down uninjured, but within three minutes two great explosions followed, and twelve-foot columns of water shot up.

"This, presumably," says the report, "was the exploding of their batteries." Our Viking ancestors would have said, perhaps, that it was the bursting of their dragon hearts.

### 3. THE DARDANELLES SUBMARINE CAMPAIGN

Our submarine campaign in the Sea of Marmora must also have a separate chapter to itself, because it was conducted under quite unique conditions. The scene of operations was not merely distant from the submarine base, it was divided from it by an approach of unusual danger and difficulty. The channel of the Dardanelles is narrow and winding, with a strong tide perpetually racing down it and setting strongly into the several bays. It was, moreover, protected, as will appear in the course of the narrative, by forts with powerful guns and searchlights and torpedo-tubes, and by barrages of thick wire and netting; it was also patrolled constantly by armed ships. Yet from the very first all these defences were evaded or broken through with marvellous courage and ingenuity; for nearly a year a succession of brilliant commanders took their boats regularly up and down the passage, and made the transport of Turkish troops and munitions across the Marmora first hazardous and finally impracticable. Their losses were small; but they passed the weeks of their incredibly long patrols in continual danger, and snatched their successes from the midst of a swarm of vigilant enemies. Two battleships, a destroyer, and 5 gun-boats fell to them, besides over 30 steamers, many of which were armed, 9 transports, 7 ammunition and store ships, and no less than 188 sailing-ships and

dhows with supplies. The pages which follow contain notes on the cruise of every British boat which attempted the passage of the Straits ; but they are far from giving an account of all their amazing feats and adventures.

Lieutenant Norman Holbrook had the honour of being the first officer to take a British submarine up the Dardanelles. He carefully prepared his boat—B 11—for the business of jumping over and under obstacles by devices which have since been perfected, but were then experimental. The preliminary trials turned out very satisfactorily, and on Sunday, December 13, 1914, as soon as the mainland search-lights were extinguished at dawn, he trimmed and dived for Sedd-el-Bahr.

His main idea was to put certain Rickmers steamers out of action, and perhaps the actual object of his pursuit was the *Lily Rickmers*. He did not get her, but he got something quite as attractive. It was 9.40 A.M., or rather more than four hours from the start, when at last he put his periscope above water, and saw immediately on his starboard beam a large two-funnelled vessel, painted grey and flying the Turkish ensign. At 600 yards he fired his starboard torpedo, put his helm hard a-starboard, and dipped to avoid remonstrances. The explosion was duly audible a few seconds later, and as B 11 came quietly up of her own motion her commander took a glimpse through the periscope. The grey ship (she was the battleship *Messudiyeh*) was still on his starboard beam and firing a number of guns. B 11 seemed bent on dipping again, but Lieutenant Holbrook was still more bent on seeing what he had done. He got her up once more and sighted his enemy, on the port



bow this time. She was settling down by the stern and her guns were no longer firing.

At this moment the man at the helm of B11 reported that the lenses of the compass had become fogged, and the instrument was for the time unreadable. Lieutenant Holbrook took a careful survey of his surroundings, calculated that he was in Sari Siglar Bay, and dived for the channel. The boat touched bottom, and for ten minutes went hop, skip, and jump along it at full speed, until she shot off into deeper water. Her commander then brought her up again, took a sight of the European shore, steadied her by it, and ran for home. By 2 P.M. he had cleared the entrance. His feat was not only brilliant in itself; it was an act of leadership, an invaluable reconnaissance. In ten hours he had proved all the possibilities of the situation—he had forced a strongly guarded channel, surprised and sunk a battleship in broad daylight, and returned safely, though he had gone up without information and come down without a compass. The V.C. was his manifest destiny.

In the following spring, after the guns of the Allied Fleets had failed to reduce the Turkish forts, the submarine campaign was developed. It began with a defeat—one of those defeats which turn to honour, and maintain the invincibility of our Service. On April 17, while attempting a difficult reconnaissance of the Kephez mine-field, E15 ran ashore in the Dardanelles within a few hundred yards of Fort No. 8. Her crew were captured while trying to get her off, and there was a danger of her falling into the enemy's hands in a serviceable condition. The only remedy was to blow her up. She was no sort of a mark for

the battleships at long range, so during the night of the 18th an attack was made by two picket-boats, manned by volunteer crews. The boat of H.M.S. *Triumph* was commanded by Lieut.-Commander Eric Robinson, who led the expedition, with Lieutenant Arthur Brooke Webb, R.N.R., and Midshipman John Woolley; and that of H.M.S. *Majestic* by Lieutenant Claud Godwin. The fort gave them over two hundred rounds at short range, mortally wounded one man, and sank the *Majestic's* boat; but Lieut.-Commander Robinson succeeded in torpedoing E 15 and rendering her useless. He brought both crews off, and left even the Germans in Constantinople admiring the pluck of his little enterprise. One officer is reported by Mr. Lewis Einstein, of the American Embassy there, to have said, "I take off my hat to the British Navy." He was right—this midnight attack by a handful of boys in boats has all the heroic romance of the old cutting-out expeditions, and, on Admiral de Robeck's report, the leader of it was promoted to Commander.

On April 25, A.E. 2 went successfully up and entered the Sea of Marmora; on the 29th Lieut.-Commander Edward Courtney Boyle followed in E 14. He started at 1.40 A.M., and the searchlight at Suan Dere was still working when he arrived there at four o'clock. The fort fired, and he dived, passing clean under the mine-field. He then passed Chanak on the surface with all the forts firing at him. Farther on there were a lot of small ships patrolling, and a torpedo gunboat at which he promptly took a shot. The torpedo got her on the quarter and threw up a column of water as high as her mast. But Lieut.-Commander Boyle could not stop to see more—he

became aware that the men in a small steamboat were leaning over and trying to catch hold of the top of his periscope. He dipped and left them, then rounded Nagara Point and dived deep. Again and again he came up and was driven down; destroyers and gunboats were chasing and firing in all directions. It was all he could do to charge his batteries at night. After running continuously for over fifty hours, the motors were so hot that he was obliged to stop. The steadiness of all on board may be judged from the record of the diving necessary to avoid destruction. Out of the first sixty-four hours of the voyage the boat was kept under for forty-four hours and fifty minutes.

On the afternoon of the 29th he sighted three destroyers convoying two troopships, fired, and dipped, for the destroyers were blazing at his periscope, and he had only that one left—the other had stopped a shot the day before. But even down below a thud was audible, and the depth gauges flicked ten feet; half an hour afterwards he saw through the periscope his own particular transport making for the shore with dense columns of yellow smoke pouring from her. And that was her last appearance. A few hours later he sighted A.E. 2 and spoke her. She had sunk one gunboat, but had had bad luck with her other torpedoes and had only one left. Lieut.-Commander Boyle arranged to meet her again next day, but next day the gallant A.E. 2 fell to a Turkish gunboat.

During these days the Sea of Marmora was glassy calm, and the patrol ships were so troublesome that Lieut.-Commander Boyle decided to sink one as a deterrent. He picked off a small mine-laying boat,



and fired at a larger one twice without success, as the wake of the torpedoes was too easily seen in the clear water.

The first four days of May he spent mainly in being hunted. On the 5th he got a shot at a destroyer convoying a transport, and made a fine right-angle hit at 600 yards, but the torpedo failed to explode. This only whetted his appetite, and for three days he chased ship after ship. One he followed ashore, but troops on board opened fire on him and hit the boat several times. At last, on the evening of May 10, after being driven down by one destroyer, he sighted another with two transports and attacked at once. His first torpedo missed the leading transport; his second shot hit the second transport and a terrific explosion followed. Debris and men were seen falling into the water; then night came on rapidly, and he could not mark the exact moment at which she sank.

Inside Constantinople they were already telling each other yarns about E 14, and for her incredible activity they even promoted her to the plural number. "One of the English submarines in the Marmora," Mr. Einstein wrote on May 11, "is said to have called at Rodosto flying the Turkish flag. The Kaimakam, believing the officers to be Germans, gave them all the petrol and provisions they required, and it was only after leaving that they hoisted their true colours." The story will not bear examination from our side; but no doubt it very usefully covered a deficiency in the Kaimakam's store account, whether caused by Germans or by the Faithful themselves.

On May 13 Lieut.-Commander Boyle records a rifle duel with a small steamer which he had chased ashore near Panidos. On the 14th he remarks the

enemy's growing shyness. "I think the Turkish torpedo-boats must have been frightened of ramming us, as several times, when I tried to remain on the surface at night, they were so close when sighted that it must have been possible to get us if they had so desired." The air was so clear that in the daytime he was almost always in sight from the shore, and signal fires and smoke columns passed the alarm continually. He had no torpedoes left, and was not mounted with a gun, so that he was now at the end of his tether. On the 17th he was recalled by wireless, and after diving all night ran for Gallipoli at full speed, pursued by a two-funnelled gunboat, a torpedo-boat, and a tug, who shepherded him one on each side and one astern, "evidently expecting," he thought, "to get me caught in the nets." But he adds, "Did not notice any nets," and after passing another two-funnelled gunboat, a large yacht, a battleship, and a number of tramps, the fire of the Chanak forts, and the mine-field as before, he reached the entrance and rose to the surface a-beam of a French battleship of the St. Louis class, who gave her fellow-crusader a rousing cheer. Commander Boyle reported that the success of this fine and sustained effort was mainly due to his officers, Lieutenant Edward Stanley and Acting-Lieutenant Lawrence, R.N.R., both of whom received the D.S.C. His own promotion to Commander was underlined by the award of the V.C.

Within twelve hours of E 14's return, her successor, E 11, was proceeding towards the Straits. The commanding officer of this boat was Lieut.-Commander M. E. Nasmith, who had already been mentioned in despatches for rescuing five airmen while being attacked by a Zeppelin in the Heligoland

Bight during the action on Christmas Day 1914. He had been waiting his turn at the Dardanelles with some impatience, and as E 11's port engine had been put completely out of action by an accident on the voyage from Malta, he had begged to be allowed to attempt the passage into the Marmora under one engine. This was refused, but his repairs were finished in time for him to take the place of E 14.

He made the passage of the Straits successfully, reconnoitred the Marmora, and made a neat arrangement, probably suggested by the adventures of E 14, for saving the enemy the trouble of so much hunting. He stopped a small coastal sailing-vessel, sent Lieutenant D'Oyly Hughes to search her for contraband, and then trimmed well down and made her fast alongside his conning-tower. Being now quite invisible from the eastward, he was able to proceed in that direction all day without interruption. At night he released his stalking-horse and returned westward.

Early on the 23rd he observed a Turkish torpedo-boat at anchor off Constantinople, and sank her with a torpedo ; but as she sank she fired a 6-pounder gun, the first shot of which damaged his foremost periscope. He came up for repairs, and all hands took the chance of a bathe. Five hours later he stopped a small steamer, whose crew did a "panic abandon ship," capsizing all boats but one. "An American gentleman then appeared on the upper deck, who informed us that his name was Silas Q. Swing of the *Chicago Sun*, and that he was pleased to make our acquaintance. . . . He wasn't sure if there were any stores on board." Lieutenant D'Oyly Hughes looked into the matter and discovered a 6-inch gun lashed across the top of the fore hatch, and other gun-



mountings in the hold, which was also crammed with 6-inch and other ammunition marked Krupp. A demolition charge sent ship and cargo to the bottom.

Lieut.-Commander Nasmith then chased and torpedoed a heavily laden store-ship, and drove another ashore, exchanging rifle-fire with a party of horsemen on the cliff above. Altogether the day was a lively one, and the news, brought by Mr. Silas Q. Swing and his friends, shook Constantinople up severely. Mr. Einstein records that "the submarine came up at twenty minutes to two o'clock, about three hundred yards from where the American guardship *Scorpion* lay moored, and was immediately fired at by the shore batteries. It shot off two torpedoes; the first missed a transport by about fifty yards, the second struck the *Stamboul* fair, passing under a barge moored alongside, which blew up. The *Stamboul* had a gap of twenty feet on her water-line, but did not sink. She was promptly towed toward Beshiktash to lie on the bottom in shallow water. The submarine meanwhile, under a perfect hail of fire, which passed uncomfortably close to the *Scorpion*, dived and got away, steering up the Bosphorus. At Galata there was a panic, every one closing their shops; the troops, who were already on two transports, were promptly disembarked, but later re-embarked, and still later landed once more. The total damage was considerable, but the moral effect was very real." On the following day he adds: "S." (Swing, no doubt—Silas Q. Swing of the *Chicago Sun*) "came in with an exciting tale. On his way to the Dardanelles the steamer, which carried munitions and a 6-inch gun, had been torpedoed by an English submarine, the E11. They allowed the crew to leave, and then

sank the ship. The English officer told him there were eleven submarines in the Marmora, and these are holding up all the ships going to the Dardanelles. They had sunk three transports full of troops, out of four which had been sunk, and various other vessels, but do not touch those carrying wounded."

So, between Lieutenant D'Oyly Hughes and Mr. Silas Q. Swing, the E 11 became eleven submarines, and may go down the ages like the eleven thousand virgins of Cologne. Her commander evidently hoped to create a panic, and Mr. Einstein leaves us no doubt that the plan succeeded to the full. On May 27 he writes again: "The Marmora is practically closed by English submarines. Every one asks where their depot is, and how they are refurnished." May 28: "The submarines in the Marmora have frightened the Turks, and all the remaining transports, save one, lie tranquilly in the Golden Horn. Otherwise I have never seen the port so empty. One wonders where the submarines have their base, and when and how it was prepared." He adds, with some shrewdness: "Probably, if at all, in some island of the Marmora, though the newer boats can stay out a long time." E 11 was far from new, as we have seen, but she was in hands that could make her stand for quality as well as quantity.

Lieut.-Commander Nasmith brought his boat safely back to Mudros on June 7. The last hour of his trip was perhaps the most breathless, for while rushing down by Kilid Bahr he found his trim quite abnormal, and "observed a large mine preceding the periscope at a distance of about twenty feet, which was apparently hung up by its moorings to the port hydroplane." He could not come to the surface, as the shore batteries

were waiting for him ; but when outside Kum Kale he emptied his after-tanks, got his nose down, and went full speed astern, dropping the mine neatly to the bottom. This was good work, but not better than the skill shown in navigating shoal water or "the resource displayed in the delicate operation of recovering two torpedoes" without the usual derrick to hoist them in—an operation which is believed to remain for the present unparalleled. Admiral de Robeck, in recommending Lieut.-Commander Nasmyth for the V.C., speaks of his cruise as one "which will surely find a place in the annals of the British Navy." It will—there can be no forgetting it. The very log of E11 deserves to be a classic. "Having dived unobserved into Constantinople . . .," says her commander soberly, and so, without a thought of it, adds one to the historic despatches of the Service.

It was now E14's turn again. Commander Courtney Boyle took her up on June 10 against a very strong tide. At 9 o'clock next morning he stopped a brigantine, whose crew abandoned ship, "and then all stood up and cursed us. It was too rough to go alongside her, so Acting-Lieutenant R. W. Lawrence, R.N.R., swam off to her, climbed aboard, and . . . set fire to her with the aid of her own matches and paraffin oil." On the 12th one of the Rickmers steamers was torpedoed. Shortly afterwards there was a big explosion close to the submarine. "And I think," says her commander, "I must have caught the moorings of a mine with my tail as I was turning and exploded it. . . . The whole boat was very badly shaken." But *Lily Rickmers* and her sister were now both removed from the Turkish service, for E11 had evidently accounted



for one of them already. Mr. Einstein writes on June 13: "The German Embassy approached us to cable Washington to protest about the torpedoing without warning of the two Rickmers steamers in the Marmora. One of these was said to be filled with wounded, but their note neglected to say that these had been discharged from hospital and were on their way back to the Dardanelles." Only a German diplomatist could speak of a ship carrying troops to the front as "filled with wounded"; and Mr. Einstein adds: "One cannot but be struck by the German inability to understand our position over the *Lusitania*." The point is plain, and goes deep. To the German war mind, as we have seen, all such considerations are only a matter of words, useful for argumentative purposes—that there should be any truth or reality of feeling behind them is not imaginable.

The rest of this log is a record of destruction, but destruction on thoroughly un-German methods. "June 20.—Boarded and sank 3 sailing-dhows . . . towed the crew inshore, and gave them some biscuit, beef, rum, and water, as they were rather wet." "June 22.—Let go passenger ship." 23.—"Burnt two-master, and started to tow crew in their boat, but had to dive. Stopped two dhows: they were both empty, and the crews looked so miserable that I only sank one and let the other go." 24.—"Blew up 2 large dhows: there was another one about a mile off with no boat . . . and thought I saw two heads in the water. Turned round and found that there were 2 men in the water at least half a mile from their dhow. Picked them up: they were quite exhausted: gave them food and drink, and put them on board their ship. They had evidently

seen the other two dhows blown up and were frightened out of their wits." There is nothing here to boast about—to us, nothing surprising. But it brings to mind inevitably the evidence upon which our enemies stand convicted. We remember the long roll of men and women not only set adrift in stormy seas, but shot and drowned in their open boats without pity and without cause. We admit the courage of the German, but we cannot admire it. It is too near to animal ferocity, and united with a cruelty and callousness which are not even beast-like.

On June 21 Commander Boyle had rendezvoused with E 12 (Lieut. - Commander K. M. Bruce). "I got her alongside, and we remained tied up for 3 hours." From this time onward the reliefs were arranged to overlap, so that there were nearly always two boats operating at the same time in the Marmora. Lieut.-Commander Bruce came up on June 19, and found, like others, that the chief difficulty of forcing the passage was the heating of the main motors on so long and strenuous a run.

The one great day of his nine days' patrol was June 25, when he brought off a hand-to-hand fight on the surface with three enemy ships. At 10.45 in the morning he sighted, in the Gulf of Mudania, a small two-decked passenger steamer. "She looked," he says, "rather like a tramcar, and was towing two sailing-vessels. In the distance was a sister of hers, towing three more." He chased, and soon stopped the nearer steamer. He could see, as he steamed round her, that she was carrying a lot of stores. She had no boat, and all the crew appeared to be on deck in life-belts. He could see no sign of guns, so he

ran his bow up alongside, and sent his first lieutenant, Tristram Fox, to board her. But guns are not the only risk a submarine has to take on such occasions. As the boarding-party stepped on board the steamer a Turk heaved a bomb over the side. It hit E 12 forward, but did not explode, and no second one followed. The Turks, however, meant fighting, and they opened fire with rifles and a small gun concealed somewhere aft. The situation was a very anxious one, especially for Lieutenant Fox and his boarding-party, for they knew their own ship must open fire in return, and it was difficult to take cover on an enemy ship in action. Lieut.-Commander Bruce was in a very tight corner, but he kept his head, and played his game without a mistake. He did not hesitate to open fire with his 6-pounder, but he began upon the enemy's stern, where the gun was concealed, and having dealt with that, he turned to her other end and put ten shots into her from fore to aft. His men shot steadily, though under gun- and rifle-fire at a range of only ten yards, and his coxswain, Charles Case, who was with him in the conning-tower, passed up the ammunition. Spare men, with rifles, kept the Turks' heads down, and all seemed to be going well, when the two sailing-ships in tow began a new and very plucky move of their own. They came in to foul the submarine's propellers, and at the same time opened fire with rifles, taking E 12 in flank. But by this time the steamer was beaten, and the British rifles soon silenced those in the sailing-ships. Then, as soon as Lieut.-Commander Bruce had cleared the steamer, he sank the three of them. The steamer had probably been carrying ammunition as well as stores, for one of the shots from the 6-pounder touched



off something explosive in her forward part. In fifteen minutes she was at the bottom.

Lieut.-Commander Bruce was already thinking of the other steamer with the three sailing-ships in tow. She was diligently making for the shore, and he had to open fire at her at 2000 yards. As he closed the fire was returned, not only from the ship, but from a gun on shore; but by this time he had hit the enemy aft and set her on fire forward. She beached herself, and as the three sailing-ships had been slipped and were also close under the shore, he had no choice but to leave them. E 12's injuries were miraculously slight—her commander's account of them is slighter still. "I was very much hampered," he says, "in my movements, and took some minutes to get clear of the first steamer. But only one man was hurt, by a splinter from the steamer." This was quite in accordance with the old English rule of the gun-decks: to hit and be missed there is nothing like closing. The story of this fine little scrimmage ends with the special recommendation by Lieut.-Commander Bruce of his first lieutenant, Tristram Fox, "who behaved exceedingly well under very trying circumstances," and of his coxswain, Charles Case, and three seamen—they all received the Distinguished Service Medal. Of the commander himself we shall hear again presently.

E 12 was recalled on June 28, leaving E 14 still at work; and on the 30th her place was taken by E 7 (Lieut.-Commander Cochrane). On the way up a torpedo from a tube on shore passed over him, and a destroyer made two attempts to ram him, but he got safely through and rendezvoused with E 14 on the following evening. His misfortunes began next day,

when Lieutenant Hallifax and an A.B. were badly burned by an explosion in the hold of a captured steamer. Then dysentery attacked the two remaining officers and the telegraphist. Work became very arduous, but work was done notwithstanding. Ship after ship was sunk—5 steamers and 16 sailing-ships in all. One of the steamers was “a Malsousie ship, the *Biga*,” of about 3000 tons. She was lying alongside Mudania Pier, with sailing-vessels moored outside the pier to protect her. But Lieut.-Commander Cochrane saw daylight between this barrage and his prey; he dived under the sailing-ships, and up went the *Biga* with a very heavy explosion.

On July 17 he tried a new method of harassing the Turkish Army. He came up opposite Kara Burnu and opened fire on the railway cutting west of it, blocking the line—then dived, and went on to Derinjie Burnu. The shipyard there was closed, but he observed a heavy troop train steaming west, towards the block he had so carefully established just before. He followed up at full speed, and after twenty minutes of anxious hope saw the train returning baffled. It eventually stopped in a belt of trees at Yarandji Station; this made spotting difficult, but E 7's gunnery was good enough. After twenty rounds the three ammunition cars of the train were definitely blown up, and E 7 could move back to Kara Burnu, where she shelled another train and hit it several times.

All this was very disturbing to the Turks, and they tried every means to stop it at the source. They had already a net in the channel, but it was quite ineffectual. “Now,” says Mr. Einstein on July 15, “it turns out that they have constructed a barrage of network to keep out the submarines from the Darda-

nelles, and this explains the removal of the buoys all along the Bosphorus. They need these, and especially their chains, to keep it in place." A week later Lieut.-Commander Cochrane saw these buoys on his way down. They were in a long line, painted alternately red and black, and stretching from a position a mile north of Maitos village to a steamer moored in Nagara Liman. He dived under them and went on his way; but later on, below Kilid Bahr, the boat fouled a moorings forward and was completely hung up, swinging round, head to tide. By admirable management she was got clear in half an hour, and then the same thing happened again. "This time," says her commander coolly, "I think the boat carried the obstruction with her for some distance. I was expecting to see something foul when we came to the surface, but everything was clear then." What he and his men saw, during those two half-hours, might also be described as "something foul."

The cruise of E 7 lasted for over three weeks, from June 30 to July 24. On July 21 Commander Courtney Boyle brought up E 14 once more. He, too, saw the new net near Nagara, "a line of what looked like lighters half-way across, and one small steamship in the vicinity." But he passed through the gate in it without touching anything. This was lucky, as he had already scraped against an obstruction off Kilid Bahr and cut his guard wire nearly through. Once up, he got to work at once, and in a busy and adventurous three weeks he sank one steamer, one supply ship, seven dhows, and thirteen sailing-vessels. In short, he made himself master of the Marmora. The complete interruption of the Turkish sea communications was proved by the statements of prisoners. The captain



of one ship stated that Constantinople was full of wounded and short of food, and that the troops now all went to Rodosto by rail and then marched to Gallipoli—six hours in the train and three days and nights marching, instead of a short and simple voyage. All the Turkish warships were above the second bridge in the Golden Horn, and they never ventured out. There were no steamers going to sea—all supplies to Gallipoli went in sailing craft, towed by destroyers under cover of darkness. It is clear that, to the Turkish imagination, E 14 was like E 11—very much in the plural number. On August 5, E 11 herself came on duty again, and the two boats met at rendezvous at 2 P.M. next day. Half an hour afterwards Commanders Boyle and Nasmith started on their first hunt in couples. Their quarry was a gunboat of the Berki-Satvet class. The chase was a lively one, and it was E 11 in the end who made the kill with a torpedo amidships. Then the two boats came alongside again and their commanders concerted a plan for shelling troops next day.

They took up their positions in the early morning hours, and waited for the game to come past. Commander Nasmith had been given the better stand of the two; at 11.30 A.M. he observed troops going towards Gallipoli, rose to the surface and fired. Several of his shots dropped well among them and they scattered. In less than an hour another column approached along the same road. E 11 had retired, so to speak, into her butt; she now stepped up again, raised her gun, and made good shooting as before. "The column took cover in open order."

In the meantime Commander Boyle had been diving up and down all the morning between Fort Victoria

and a point four miles up the coast to the east, about a mile from shore. Three times he came to the surface, but each time the troops turned out to be bullocks. At 1.30 P.M. (when he came up for the fourth time) more dust was coming down the road, and this time it was the right kind of dust. As he opened fire he heard E 11 banging away. She had left the place where he had stationed her, to the N.E. of Dohan Aslan Bank, and had come down to join him in his billet. The two boats then conducted a joint action for the best part of an hour. Commander Boyle got off forty rounds, of which about six burst on the road among the troops, and one in a large building. But the distance was almost beyond his 6-pounder's reach. He had to put the full range on the sights, and then aim at the top of the hill, so that his fire was less accurate than that of Commander Nasmith with his 12-pounder. E 11 had strewed the road with a large number of dead and wounded, when guns on shore came into action and forced her to dive. She came up again an hour and a half later and dispersed the troops afresh, but once more had to dive for her life.

Next day Commander Boyle ordered E 11 to change billets with him, and both boats had luck, Commander Boyle destroying a 5000-ton supply steamer with torpedo and gunfire, and Commander Nasmith bagging a battleship. This last was the *Haireddin Barbarossa*. She was passing about five miles N.E. of Gallipoli, escorted by a destroyer. E 11 was skilfully brought into position on her starboard beam, and the torpedo got home amidships. The *Barbarossa* immediately took a list to starboard. altered course towards the shore, and opened a heavy

fire on the submarine's periscope. But she was mortally hit. Within twenty minutes a large flash burst from her fore part, and she rolled over and sank. To lose their last battleship, and so near home, was a severe blow for the Turks, and they made every effort to conceal the depressing details. Mr. Einstein, however, heard them and makes an interesting entry: "The *Barbarossa* was sunk in the Marmora and not in the Dardanelles, as officially announced. She was convoying barges full of munitions and also two transports, when she found herself surrounded by six submarines." It is creditable to Commander Nasmith that he did so well with only six of his E 11 flotilla. Einstein continues: "The transports were supposed to protect her, but the second torpedo proved effective and she sank in seven minutes. One of the transports and a gunboat were also sunk, the other ran aground. Of crews of 700, only one-third were saved." And on August 15 he records further successes by Commander Nasmith—a large collier, the *Ispahan*, sunk while unloading in the port of Haidar Pasha, the submarine creeping up under the lee of another boat; and two transports with supplies, the *Chios* and the *Samsoun*, sunk in the Marmora.

Commander Boyle returned to his base on August 12, with no further difficulty than a brush against a mine and a rough-and-tumble encounter with an electric wire obstruction, portions of which he carried away tangled round his periscope and propellers. His boat had now done over 12,000 miles since leaving England and had never been out of running order—a magnificent performance, reported by her commander to be primarily due to the excellence of his chief engine-room artificer, James Hollier Hague, who was

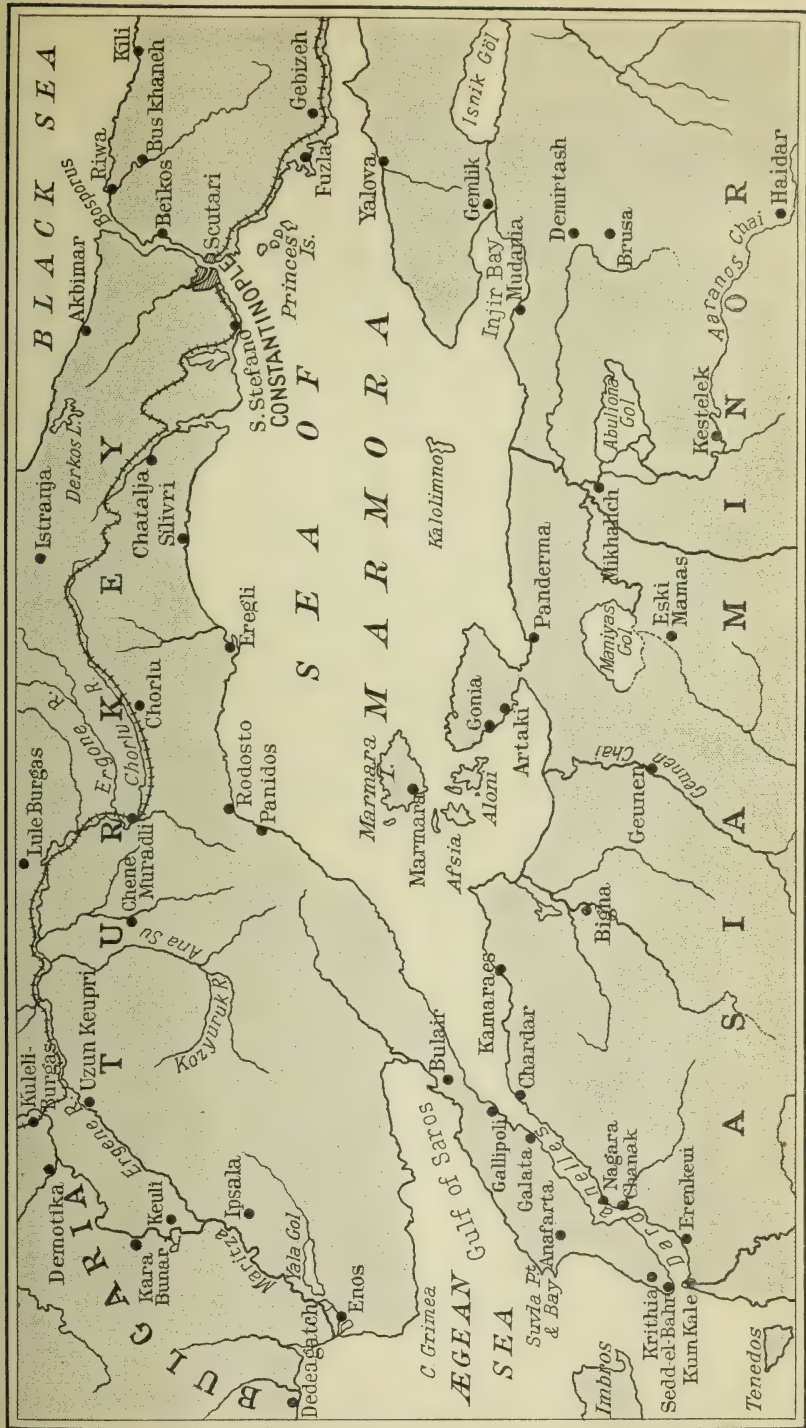


accordingly promoted to warrant rank, as from the date of the recommendation.

E 14 was succeeded on August 13 by E 2, Commander David Stocks, who met Commander Nasmith at 2 P.M. next day, and handed over a fresh supply of ammunition for E 11. He also, no doubt, told him the story of his voyage up. Off Nagara his boat had fouled an obstruction, and through the conning-tower scuttles he could see that a  $3\frac{1}{2}$ -inch wire was wound with a half turn round his gun, a smaller wire round the conning-tower itself, and another round the wire-less standard aft. It took him ten minutes' plunging and backing to clear this and regain control; and during those ten minutes small explosions were heard continuously. These were apparently from bombs thrown by guard boats; but a series of loud explosions a little later were probably from shells fired by a destroyer which was following up, and was still overhead an hour afterwards.

The two boats parted again, taking separate beats, and spent a week in sinking steamers, boarding hospital ships, and bombarding railway stations. When they met again on the evening of August 21, Commander Nasmith had a new kind of yarn to tell. His lieutenant, D'Oyly Hughes, had volunteered to make an attack on the Ismid Railway, and a whole day had been spent behind Kalolimno Island in constructing a raft capable of carrying one man and a demolition charge of gun-cotton. Then the raft had been tested by a bathing party, and the details of the plan most carefully laid out.

The object was to destroy the viaduct if possible; but, in any case, to blow up part of the line. The risk involved not only the devoted adventurer himself,







but the boat as well, for she could not, so long as he had still a chance of returning, quit the neighbourhood or even conceal herself by submerging. The approach was in itself an operation of the greatest delicacy. Commander Nasmith took his boat slowly towards the shore until her nose just grounded, only three yards from the rocks. The cliffs on each side were high enough to prevent the conning-tower being seen while in this position. At 2.10 A.M. Lieutenant D'Oyly Hughes dropped into the water and swam off, pushing the raft with his bale of gun-cotton, and his clothes and accoutrements, towards a spot some sixty yards on the port bow of the boat. His weapons were an automatic service revolver and a sharpened bayonet. He also had an electric torch and a whistle. At the point where he landed he found the cliffs unscalable. So he relaunched his raft and swam along to a better place. He reached the top after a stiff climb, approached the railway line by a careful prowling of half an hour, and went along it for five or six hundred yards, hugging his heavy and cumbersome charge. Voices then brought him up short. He peered about and saw three men sitting by the side of the line. After watching them for some time he decided that they were not likely to move, and that he must make a wide detour in order to inspect the viaduct. He laid down his gun-cotton and crept inland, making good progress except for falling into a small farm-yard, where the fowls, but luckily not the household, awoke and protested. At last he got within three hundred yards of the viaduct. It was easy to see, for there was a fire burning at the near end of it; but there was also a stationary engine working, and a number of workmen moving about. Evidently

it would be impossible to bring up and lay his charge there.

He crept back, therefore, to his gun-cotton and looked about for a convenient spot to blow up the line. The best place seemed to be a low brick-work support over a small hollow. It was only 150 yards from the three men sitting by the line ; but there was no other spot where so much damage could be done, and Lieutenant D'Oyly Hughes was a volunteer, prepared to take risks. He muffled the pistol for firing the fuse as tightly as possible with a piece of rag, and pulled off. On so still a night it made a very loud noise. The three Turks heard it and he saw them instantly stand up. The next moment they were running down the line, with Lieutenant D'Oyly Hughes going his best in front of them. But a chase of this kind was not what he wanted. His present object was to find a quiet spot on the shore where he could take to the water undisturbed, and he had no time to lose. He turned on his pursuers and fired a couple of shots ; the Turks were not hit, but they remembered their own weapons and began firing too, which was just the relief Lieutenant Hughes needed.

He had already decided against trying to climb down by the way he had come up ; but after a considerable run eastward he struck the shore more conveniently about three-quarters of a mile from the small bay in which E 11 was lying. As he plunged into the water, he had the joy of hearing the sound of a heavy explosion. His charge had hung fire for a long time, but when it went it went well ; fragments were hurled between a quarter and half a mile, and fell into the sea near the boat. There could be no doubt that the line was effectively cut, and he could

now give his whole attention to saving an officer to the Service.

This was the most desperate part of the affair. After swimming some four hundred or five hundred yards out to sea, he blew a long blast on his whistle ; but the boat was behind the cliffs in her little bay and failed to hear him. Day was breaking rapidly ; the time of waiting for him must, he knew, be limited. With a decision and coolness beyond comment he swam ashore again and rested for a short time on the rocks—then swam off once more, directly towards the boat. Before he reached the bay he had to discard in turn his pistol, his bayonet, and his electric torch. At last he rounded the point and his whistle was heard ; but, at the same moment, shouts came from the cliffs overhead, and rifle-fire opened on the boat.

She immediately backed, and came slowly astern out of the bay, intent only upon picking up Lieutenant D'Oyly Hughes. But now came the most extraordinary part of the whole adventure. In the early morning mist the bow, the gun, and the conning-tower of the submarine appeared to her distressed officer to be three small rowing-boats advancing towards him, and rowing-boats could only mean enemies. He turned, swam ashore, and tried to hide himself under the cliffs. But he did not lose his head, and after climbing a few feet he looked back and realised his mistake. He shouted and plunged in again. Forty yards from the rocks he was at last picked up, nearly done, for he had run hard for his life and swum a mile in his clothes. But he had done his work, and E 11 was proud of him, as appears from the concluding sentence in her log : “ 5.5 A.M. Dived



out of rifle-fire, and proceeded out of the Gulf of Ismid."

Commander Nasmith ended his cruise with a brilliant week's work. On August 22 he fought an action with three armed tugs, a dhow, and a destroyer; succeeded most adroitly in evading the destroyer, sinking the dhow and one of the tugs by gunfire, and capturing a number of prisoners, among whom was a German bank manager with a quantity of money for Chanak Bank. The prisoners willingly helped to discharge the cargo of another captured ship—they were apparently much surprised at being granted their lives. On the 25th two large transports were sunk with torpedoes; on the 28th E 11 and E 2, in company, bombarded the magazine and railway station at Mudania. On September 1 Commander Nasmith had an hour's deliberate shooting at the railway viaduct, scoring a large number of hits; and on the 3rd he returned without misadventure to his base.

Left to herself, E 2 now found that she also possessed a heroic lieutenant. Under the date September 7 there stands the brief record: "Lieutenant Lyon swam to and destroyed two dhows." The story, so well begun, ends next day. At 2.15 A.M. this adventurer, like the other, swam off with a raft and bag of gun-cotton. His object, like the other's, was to destroy a railway bridge. His friends watched him until, at 70 yards' distance, he faded into the dusk. From that moment onwards no sound was ever heard from him. The night was absolutely still, and noises on shore were distinctly audible, but nothing like a signal ever came. It had been agreed that if any trouble arose he should fire his Webley

pistol, and the submarine should then show a red light and open fire on the station, which was 300 yards distant. For five hours she remained there waiting. An explosion was heard, but nothing followed, and broad daylight found Commander Stocks still waiting with desperate loyalty. At 7.15 he dived out to sea. An hour later he came to the surface and cruised about the place, hoping that Lyon had managed somehow to get into a boat or dhow. There were several near the village, and he might be lying off in one. But no boat drifted out, then or afterwards. Commander Stocks came again at dawn next day—perhaps, as he said, to bombard the railway station, perhaps for another reason. Six days later he dived for home, breaking right through the Nagara net by a new and daring method of his own.

It was now Lieut.-Commander Bruce's turn again, and he passed all records by patrolling the Marmora successfully in E 12 for forty days. He had two other boats in company during part of this time—E 20 and H 1—and with the latter's help he carried out a very pretty "spread attack" on a gunboat off Kalolimno on October 17. The intended manœuvre was for E 12 to rise suddenly and drive the enemy by gunfire over H 1, who dived at the first gun. The first drive failed, the second was beautifully managed; but, in the bad light of an approaching squall, H 1's torpedo missed. In a third attempt the bird was reported hit by several shells, but she escaped in the darkness. Lieut.-Commander Bruce also did good shooting at a powder factory near Constantinople, sank some shipping, and made some remarkable experiments with a new method of signalling. But his greatest experience was his return journey.

He had passed through the net, he thought, but suddenly observed that he was towing a portion of it with him. The boat began to sink quietly, bows down; the foremost hydroplane jammed. He immediately forced her nose up by blowing ballast tanks and driving her at full speed. But even in that position she continued to sink till she reached 245 feet. At that depth the pressure was tremendous. The conning-tower scuttles were burst in and the conning-tower filled with water. The boat leaked badly, and the fore compartment had to be closed off to prevent the water getting into the battery, where it would have produced the fatal fumes of chlorine gas.

For ten mortal minutes the commander wrestled with his boat. At last, by putting three men on to the hydroplane with hand-gear, he forced the planes to work and the boat rose. He just managed to check her at 12 feet and got her down to 50, but even at that depth six patrol vessels could be heard firing at her—probably she was still towing something which made a wake on the surface.

Blind, and almost unmanageable, E 12 continued to plunge up and down, making very little way beyond Nagara. The conning-tower and its compass were out of action, but the commander conned his boat from the main gyro compass, and when both diving gauges failed he used the gauge by the periscope. The climax was reached when at 80 feet, just to the south of Kilid Bahr, another obstruction was met and carried away. But this was a stroke of luck, for when the commander, by a real inspiration, put on full speed ahead and worked his helm, the new entanglement slid along the side of the boat and carried away with it the old one from Nagara. The boat rose



steeply by the bow and broke surface. Shore batteries and patrols opened fire, and a small shell cracked the conning-tower; others hit the bridge, and two torpedoes narrowly missed her astern. But she came safely through to Helles, and reached her base after a cruise of over 2000 miles.

H 1 also put nearly 2000 miles to her credit, though her cruise lasted only thirty days, as against E 12's forty. Lieutenant Wilfred Pirie, her commander, took a hand in Lieut.-Commander Bruce's signalling experiments and co-operated in several of his military enterprises, as we have already seen. He also worked with E 20 and was the last to meet her. This was on October 31, the day before he dived for home. After that nothing more was heard of her till December 5, when Commander Nasmith, who was once more in the Marmora with E 11, captured a Shirket steamer and obtained much information from the captain, a French-speaking Turk. According to his statement, E 20 had been ambushed and her officers and crew taken prisoners. He also gave details of the German submarines based at Constantinople—he thought there were ten of them, including three large ones. Before accepting this, we shall do well to refer again to Mr. Einstein, who reports four small boats coming from Pola, of which only three arrived; and one larger one, U 51, of which he tells an amusing story. U 51 had been at Constantinople, but during August she went out and did not return; it was rumoured that she had gone home, or been sunk. Then the Turks were electrified by news of the arrival of a new German super-submarine over 200 feet long. All Constantinople crowded to see her go out on August 30. "Departure from Golden Horn of a new giant German

submarine, the U 54, over 200 feet long and with complete wireless apparatus." Next day: "The U 54 turns out to be our old friend U 51, with another number painted." On September 2 Mr. Einstein adds sarcastically: "Report that U 54 was badly damaged by a Turkish battery at Silivri. . . . To mask this, they are spreading the rumour that an English submarine ran aground, and will doubtless bring in the German boat under a false number as though she were a captured prey." And two days later he was justified—"U 54 lies damaged in the Golden Horn from the fire of a Turkish battery. The reported sinking of an English boat is a downright lie."

Commander Nasmith went down the Straits on December 23, after a record cruise of forty-eight days. In that time he sank no less than forty-six enemy ships, including a destroyer, the *Var Hissar*, and ten steamers. A fortnight before he left, E 2 (Commander Stocks) came up, and did good work in very bad weather, until she was recalled on January 2, 1916. The season was over, and she found, in passing down the Straits, that the Turkish net had apparently been removed, either by the enemy themselves, or perhaps by the wear and tear of British submarines repeatedly charging it and carrying it away piecemeal.

So ended our Eastern submarine campaign—a campaign in which our boats successfully achieved their military objects—in which, too, the skill of our officers and men was only surpassed by their courage, and by their chivalrous regard for the enemies whom they defeated.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE BATTLE OF JUTLAND

#### 1. GERMAN CLAIMS

THE news of the battle of Jutland caused disappointment in England, not only because it was given to the public in a tame and unintelligent official statement, but because the hopes and expectations of the nation had been set upon a spectacular victory which should rank with Trafalgar and the Nile. In Germany, to those who knew the facts and could estimate them, the early days of June were full of something more than disappointment, but the situation was very differently dealt with. The English Admiralty were anxious to publish the material facts, the German to conceal them. The result is, now that all is known, that Admiral Jellicoe's first balance-sheet needed correction only on one side—he overestimated the number of ships he had sunk and understated the number he had damaged, but he told the whole truth about his own losses. Admiral Scheer's account, on the other hand, needs on both sides an amount of correction which he has not troubled to give it. He still overestimates the number of British ships present and the number sunk, while he still conceals the full extent of the damage which, in fact, rendered his fleet incapable of further action. He does not, now



that the war is over, verify and accept his adversary's account as Admiral Jellicoe has done, and when we consider how easily this could have been done, the neglect to do it gives an unfavourable impression of his candour, and warrants us in examining his report of the action with greater care.

The first thing which strikes the reader of Admiral Scheer's book is that throughout, and especially in the Jutland chapters, the object is plainly not scientific or historical, but political or propagandist. Admiral von Holtzendorff believes that "in life it is not things as they are which decide, but the images people make of them. Whether Great Britain's naval predominance remains or not depends upon what the rest of the world outside of Germany thinks on the matter." Admiral Scheer thinks, on the same lines, that whether the British control of the sea remained after Jutland depends upon what the world can be induced to think on the matter. He therefore, consciously or unconsciously, conceals the real issue behind a cloud of technical details and conjectures, and assures his readers, as he assured the Kaiser at the time, that England's superiority was wrecked in the battle. Fortunately, both in the matters of detail and on the general question, we have more convincing German authority to depend upon.

To begin with, it is impossible for him, for obvious reasons, to state that he intended on May 31 to challenge an action with the Grand Fleet. He advanced against cruisers and merchantmen outside and in the Skagerak, because a movement farther north "would lead into waters where he could not allow himself to be forced into giving battle." Notwithstanding these words, he speaks of his advance as

one which, in all probability, would involve him in a serious battle—he hoped, in fact, to meet a part of our fleet, “separate enemy divisions”—with the whole of his own. But on a later page he ventures further, and quotes his own earlier statement that “the battle was brought about as a result of systematic efforts to attract the enemy out of his retirement. . . . England’s purpose of strangling Germany economically without seriously exposing her own Fleet to the German guns had to be defeated. . . . The readiness to face a battle rests on the fundamental idea that even the numerically inferior must not shirk an attack.” In spite of these pretentious afterthoughts, we may be sure that on May 31 he had his wish and something more. With sixteen dreadnoughts and six older battleships, which he afterwards realised were incapable of lying in a modern line of battle, he met a fleet of twenty-eight dreadnoughts, whose armament included two hundred guns of power greatly superior to any in his fleet. Yet, in order to sustain his contention that he engaged this fleet without surprise and gained a victory over it, he speaks of the second phase of the fight as the “pursuit,” and in the third phase, “the battle,” he asserts that “there was never any question of his line veering round to avoid an encounter, the resolve to do battle with the enemy stood firm from the first.” He then again quotes from his original summary. “The clever attempt made by the English to surround and cut us off from home by their Main Fleet was turned into a defeat, as we twice succeeded in pushing into the enemy formation with all our strength, and in withdrawing from the intended encircling movement.” The flight by night he represents as a deliberate

action and another victory, by adding to the one cruiser and three destroyers which he actually sank, an entirely imaginary list of one battle-cruiser and four destroyers sunk, and several battle-cruisers and destroyers badly damaged. Finally, he claims that on the morning of June 1 he was ready to fight another action with Admiral Jellicoe, who, however, was compelled to avoid him because his ships were so scattered that he had lost the general command.

Admiral Scheer is admittedly Germany's ablest admiral, selected to command where others had failed. As Commander-in-Chief, he seems to have shown as much energy as was allowed by the German policy, and in the battle itself we have always admitted, as we could afford to do, that the fleet under his command gave us some hard knocks, and made its escape from annihilation with success and credit. It is the more disappointing to find that his account of the action is confused and inaccurate in detail, and wholly insufficient to sustain any part of his claim.

He tells his story in six sections. The first is preliminary, and has been already dealt with. The second relates to the battle-cruiser engagement at which Admiral Scheer was not present. It contains one enigmatical statement: "That the enemy (Beatty) deployed to the south was a very welcome fact for us, as it offered the possibility of inducing the enemy to fall back on his own Main Fleet"—and two inaccurate and uncorrected ones, namely, that Admiral Evan-Thomas had five battleships of the *Queen Elizabeth* type instead of four, and that in the flotilla action the British lost four destroyers instead of two.

In Section Three the mistake about the *Queen*



*Elizabeths* is repeated with emphasis, and a plan is given in which the High Sea Fleet appears for the first time. It is shown as engaging and overlapping Evan-Thomas, and in the last paragraph the truth about "the pursuit" appears. "The leader of the fleet was under the impression that the enemy was succeeding in getting away," and the signal was made accordingly "to give chase." In spite of this, Hipper, under an attack by British destroyers, "had no alternative" but to bring his unit round to the south-west in an endeavour to close up with the Main Fleet, and Admiral Scheer observed almost simultaneously that the admiral at the head of his own battleship line began to veer round to starboard in an easterly direction. This, he says, was in accordance with the instructions to keep up the pursuit. Unfortunately the Admiral, who here passes into his fourth section, interposes a plan of the position at the moment when the battleships began to veer to starboard, and it shows that Evan-Thomas was then far away on the port bow and Beatty directly ahead. It was, in fact, at this time that the *Invincibles* were approaching, and that Hipper was turning to close his own Fleet. The truth is clear; whether or not the *Inflexibles* were mistaken for battleships, it is plain that the approach of the Grand Fleet had been perceived, and the German Fleet was forced to bend.

We are now approaching the main action, and the account falls into confusion. The arrival of the *Invincibles* and *Warriors* is mentioned out of place, and without any time being stated. A plan is then given of the position at 6.16, showing Scheer's squadron still engaging Evan-Thomas, but heading straight for the van of the Grand Fleet, which is

circling round to the south. In point of fact, Jellicoe was at this moment deploying towards the east, and if the German battleships were steering as shown in the plan, they had the Grand Fleet parallel to them, and no longer across their T. At this moment, however, Admiral Scheer himself decided to turn his line and "bring it on to an opposite course." Otherwise, he says naïvely, an awkward situation would have arisen round their pivot, which the enemy line by degrees was passing. A running fight, he continues, on a southerly course, would not have been advantageous to him, because his ships would have stood out against the clear western horizon. He does not seem to be aware that in saying this he admits what he had previously denied, that he had already turned south and was now declining action, but he criticises Jellicoe, who should, he thinks, have followed the veer round and held firmly to the German line, which would have greatly impeded their movements. He then states that the reason for this was partly the artificial smoke sent out by his destroyers, but adds that it was chiefly, no doubt, due to the severe losses the enemy had suffered. It is difficult to understand how he could suppose that the loss of three cruisers, though he adds to them an imaginary battleship and battle-cruiser, could have interfered with the closing of a retiring fleet by one whose numbers and guns were superior by more than 50 per cent.

Now follows Admiral Scheer's second turn away, and the still more extraordinary explanation of it. If the enemy followed him, his own action in retaining the present direction would, he felt, partake of the nature of a retreat, and might lead to the sacrifice

of his rear ships or to a fight under compulsion. Still less, he says, was it feasible to detach himself from the enemy, leaving it to Admiral Jellicoe to decide when he would elect to renew the fight next morning. The only way of averting this was to force the enemy into a second battle by another determined advance. This would surprise the enemy and upset his plans.

His method of forcing a second battle was a curious one. The battle-cruisers were ordered to operate with full strength on the British leading point, all the torpedo flotillas were to attack in the hope of rescuing the sinking *Wiesbaden's* crew, and, under cover of all this, the battleship line "was again swung round to starboard on an easterly course." This "led to the intended result, bringing about a full resumption of firing at the van in the same running fight as before." In other words, the battle-cruisers were thrown in again to save the battleships. The "acknowledged purpose," however, of Admiral Scheer was to deal a blow at the centre of the enemy line, "in spite of crossing the T." It is quite impossible to understand what is meant by this, but the result was that the German battle-cruisers and fifth division were crippled in the use of their guns by their numerous casualties, and some of them badly damaged; but "they dashed recklessly to the attack." A few moments later, at 7.17, Admiral Scheer swung his line round for the third time. This time no reason is given, except that the attack by the torpedo flotilla had just achieved its purpose by compelling the British battleships to turn away from their torpedoes. He then lost sight of his enemy, but claims that he afterwards came gradually back to a



south-easterly course to meet the British encircling movement. Of the fighting which followed for an hour and twenty minutes between the two battle-cruiser squadrons, and which was disastrous to the *Lützow* and *Derfflinger*, he says nothing.

It is difficult to believe that Admiral Scheer can be unaware of the difference between this phantasmagoria and the ascertained facts. In criticising him, we need not rely upon British evidence only. We have fortunately a professional account of the battle by Korvetten-Kapitän von Hase, Chief Gunnery Officer of the *Derfflinger*, the ship which towards the end of the action headed the line, and was engaged till the very end. His account is minute and clear throughout, and gives a very different complexion to the fight.

At 4.59 P.M. (Jellicoe makes it 5.4) Hipper turned his squadron on to a N.N.W. course. Beatty, as we know, had already turned north twelve minutes before, and Captain von Hase tells us that at 5.21 Admiral Scheer signalled to Hipper to pursue the British battle-cruisers, which were now fast disappearing at 28 knots; but, as Hipper's squadron could only do 25 knots, the chase was abandoned, and they engaged instead Evan-Thomas's distant battleships. This, then, is what becomes, on examination, of Admiral Scheer's "pursuit." Captain von Hase adds that Hipper's squadron being completely outranged by Evan-Thomas and accordingly depressed, and being also attacked by British destroyers, turned away at 5.40 six points to starboard; also, that Admiral Beatty's disappearance to the northward was the beginning of an outflanking movement, which was a model manœuvre and a technical per-

formance of the highest order. At 5.55 Hipper turns again sharp easterly. At 6 he turns still farther to the south again, to avoid torpedo attack. At 6.12 he goes about again on a N.N.E. course. At 6.15, however, he comes under heavy fire, and the horizon is now filled with British ships in unending line. *Wiesbaden* is on fire between the lines, and *Defence* is blown up. At 6.25, when the *Invincibles* are coming into action, the German battleships suffer severely. The *Lützow*, Hipper's flagship at the head of the line, is reported heavily hit and on fire. At 6.29 the *Derfflinger* ranges on the *Invincible*, but is immediately heavily hit herself. Two guns are put out of action by one shell, and two other heavy shells strike her aft. At 6.31 the duel ends. *Invincible* blows up after receiving salvos every twenty seconds for the last minute and a half. But two minutes later the *Lützow* is barely able to keep station, and the *Derfflinger* has ceased fire. At 6.50 Admiral Hipper leaves the *Lützow*, which has a heavy list, and goes aboard a destroyer to transfer his flag to the least damaged ship in his squadron. The choice is a difficult one. The *Derfflinger*, next astern, is disqualified for flag duties by injury to her wireless. Moreover, in addition to damage to her secondary armament, she has a hole twenty feet square in her bows. The *Seydlitz*, next addressed by Admiral Hipper, is found to have the whole of her wireless shot away. In addition, she has shipped several thousand tons of water. The Admiral thereupon remains on board his destroyer until a lull in the firing enables him to board the *Moltke*, and the *Derfflinger* leads the line; but she has first to be stopped to get the wreckage of her torpedo-net away

from her propeller. The *Liützow* at 7 o'clock turns off slowly to the southward, to be abandoned and torpedoed by her crew during the night.

What follows enables us to understand and share to the full Admiral Scheer's admiration of the conduct of his battle-cruisers. Reduced to three battered ships, the squadron did indeed "dash recklessly to the attack." It was at 7.5, Captain von Hase tells us, that they again cleared for action, while the leading ships of the Main German Fleet were crumpling up as the Grand Fleet began to pass to the westward of it. At 7.10 the German Battle Fleet was heading westerly, avoiding general action, but at 7.12 Admiral Scheer signalled to his half-dead battle-cruiser squadron to "close the enemy." The *Derfflinger* at once proceeded at full speed on a S.E. course. Her upper 12-inch turret aft was immediately hit and destroyed by a 15-inch shell. A few seconds later another hit destroyed the lower aft-turret also with its crew. Two minutes later her main fire-control was made untenable by fumes. Another hit then shook the whole control station, and still another carried away the chart house. The upper fore-turret was now also disabled. At 7.18, we are told, Admiral Scheer, having drawn off his main fleet, again ordered the battle-cruiser squadron to take up a running fight with the enemy, and they accordingly turned from south to west by south, following on a parallel course with the head of the British line. At 7.20 they were mercifully hid from the British ships by the smoke of the burning *Liützow*, and Hipper hauled them out of range. The *Derfflinger*, hit by about twenty 15-inch shells, was on fire fore and aft: only two heavy guns forward and two 6-inch guns on the port side



were still in action. At 7.37 she fired her last heavy round, and drew off in the wake of the Main Battle Fleet, followed only by the *Von der Tann*. The *Seydlitz* and *Moltke* were not in the line during the night. The former only reached Wilhelmshaven on June 2. The *Derfflinger* got back during the afternoon of June 1, and was in dockyard hands for the next six months.

We are now able to attach a more exact meaning to Admiral Scheer's phraseology. We know now what are the facts which correspond to, or are included under, his use of the words "pursuit," "never veering round to avoid an encounter," and "forcing the enemy into a second battle by another determined advance." We can also appreciate his decision next morning that his battle-cruisers "would not be capable of sustaining a serious fight." We are not yet, however, fully informed as to the doings of the German Battle Fleet during these hours; but we have certain results which help to fill the gap. The leading ships of the battle-line, the most powerful in the fleet, could not, Admiral Scheer tells us, have fought next morning for any length of time from the reduction of their ammunition by the long spell of firing. In this long spell of firing, and with this prodigal expenditure of shell, they had succeeded in making a single hit upon the Grand Fleet—the hit which cost *Colossus* three men wounded. Such shooting as this was probably not characteristic of the High Sea Fleet in its more undisturbed moments; we may be sure that if it had been "pursuing" or "defeating" an enemy, or even "standing firm from the first to do battle," they would have done considerably better than this. Admiral Scheer himself gives us some help towards

understanding the failure. Besides the damage to the battle-cruisers, which made it astonishing that they had remained navigable, and the mine injury to the *Ostfriesland*, he admits that the *Grosser Kurfürst* and *Markgraf* had to be sent to Hamburg and the *König* through the Canal to Kiel, to be repaired. The three ships named were at the head of the German line when it first came within range of Admiral Burney's squadron. The dockyards at Wilhelms-haven are also given credit for excellent work in restoring the Fleet. Nine more battleships, as we now know, were injured by shell-fire or torpedoes, and some of these were laid up for months. It becomes easier to picture the crumpling up of Admiral Scheer's line and to appreciate both his desperate position and the skill with which he extricated it, when we remember that out of his twenty-two battleships, twelve were receiving punishment and none were able to fire effectively in return. The *König* (Rear-Admiral Behncke's flagship) received fifteen hits. Four of her forward compartments were flooded, the ship went down by the head, the foc'sle was only  $6\frac{1}{2}$  feet above water, and the crew of the forward torpedo-tube were imprisoned in their flat, and had to be fed through the voice-pipe until they were extricated six days after. The foremost turret was put out of action by a direct hit, and two casemates were also hit and the gun-crews killed. Fires broke out, sixty-five men were killed, and over thirty wounded, including the Admiral himself. The ship listed so heavily to port that some of her star-board compartments had to be flooded to right her. This again throws light on Admiral Scheer's statement that none of the battleships on their return keeled

over or showed an increased draught. The *König*, he tells us, went into dock because her anchor-cables had been shot away. In the case of the battle-cruisers, he admits that the exterior damage was considerably greater. They were "docked to find out to what extent repairs would be necessary," and a technical commission was appointed to make a thorough investigation in order to utilise the experience gained. We are told no details, and one only of their conclusions—the torpedo-nets must be done away with. Fortunately other records are now accessible. Of the *Derfflinger* we have already heard. The *Seydlitz* fared even worse. She was hit by twenty-eight shells. The forecastle was riddled and the men's quarters flooded. Two turrets were hit and the entire crew of one killed; a magazine had to be flooded to avoid explosion. Fire was kept up from one turret, but only till 7 P.M. She was then taken in tow by the light cruiser *Pillau*, but was beached on the way home in a sinking condition. Two pumping vessels afterwards refloated her and took her into dock, where she remained, like the *Derfflinger*, till December. The *Moltke* and *Von der Tann* were also hard hit, but took only six weeks to repair. Of the eleven light cruisers, four were lost and six damaged. This alone was sufficient to put the fleet out of action for some time.

The night action for which the Germans had specially fitted their ships did not prove favourable to them except in one respect. Damaged as they were, they did succeed in running through the rear of the British force; but their losses were heavy out of all proportion to ours. They sank the *Black Prince*, and the *Sparrowhawk*, *Ardent*, and *Turbulent*



destroyers. On the other hand, the *Ostfriesland*, and probably other ships, were mined, the battleship *Pommern* and the light cruiser *Frauenlob* and the destroyer V 4 were torpedoed and sunk. The light cruiser *Rostock* was also torpedoed, and both she and the battle-cruiser *Lützow* had to be abandoned and blown up. The light cruiser *Elbing* and the battleship *Posen* collided. Both were put out of action and the *Elbing* abandoned and sunk.

It is therefore abundantly clear that for a battle next morning Admiral Jellicoe had a considerably larger margin of superiority than when the two fleets first left port. He had still available twenty-six out of twenty-eight battleships, and all but four of them were untouched; four out of six battle-cruisers, besides the two *Inflexibles*; and all his light forces, except three cruisers sunk, three light cruisers severely hit, seven destroyers sunk and several injured. To meet him, Admiral Scheer had six left out of eight battleships of Squadron I., but one had left the squadron after ramming a destroyer. Of Squadron II., the older ships, he had five left out of six, but he had found the whole class unfit to lie in the line. Of Squadron III., he had five or six left out of eight, but they were short of ammunition and three of them had been severely hit. Of his battle-cruisers only two were left out of five, and they were "incapable of serious fighting." Of the eleven light cruisers, one had gone home with the *Seydlitz*, four had been sunk, and six others hit. It needs no expert knowledge to realise that with such a force as this it would have been impossible for Admiral Scheer to make a battle at all.

Admiral Jellicoe might have lost ships in a mine-

field, but hardly from the guns of some twenty battleships, of which five were obsolete, six had no ammunition, and all had proved incapable under fire of hitting twenty-seven enemies. Admiral Scheer was early informed of the position of the British forces and believed them to be considerably scattered, but he could not venture out even against an isolated squadron which he wrongly understood to be a force of older battleships from Harwich. Captain von Hase is of opinion that Admiral Jellicoe was right in refraining from pushing on into German territorial waters. He thinks that if he had tried to join issue off Horn's Reef, "England's Fleet would undoubtedly have had to relinquish in favour of America its rank as the strongest fleet in the world." No reason is given for this opinion, and it can only be conjectured that the Germans had prepared in that direction with mines and submarines a trap in which they placed absolute confidence. If so, we can understand Admiral Scheer's disappointment at not being followed by the enemy.

We have now dealt with two of Admiral Scheer's three claims—first, that he never broke off or sought to break off the action, and secondly, that on the balance of losses he is entitled to call himself victorious. The third claim can be still more easily disposed of. "We have been able to prove to the world that the English Navy no longer possesses her boasted irresistibility. . . . The German national spirit can only be impressed on the world through a High Sea Fleet directed against England. If, however, as an outcome of our present condition we are not finally to be bled to death, full use must be made of the U-boat as a means of war so as to grip England's

vital nerve." Here we see again the old lack of policy, the old uncertainty as to which was really the best weapon to use. Admiral Scheer says he expressed these views to the Imperial Chancellor on June 30, and laid great emphasis on them in his report of July 4. But it was in vain. The long wrangle over the U-boat war had still six months to run, and the Fleet no one any longer dreamed of sending into action. As Captain Persius wrote afterwards in the *Berliner Tageblatt*, "The losses sustained by our Fleet were enormous, in spite of the fact that luck was on our side; and on June 1, 1916, it was clear to every one of intelligence that this fight would be and must be the only one to take place. Those in authority have often admitted this openly." The High Sea Fleet could not challenge the control of the sea, which remained where it had always been, undisturbed.

One word must be added. In view of the obvious nature of the fact last stated, it might seem almost unnecessary to refute Admiral Scheer's claims in detail. But refutation was necessary because the claims are made not in error, for the truth could have been ascertained, nor in pursuance of a desire, natural enough in war-time, to keep up the spirit of a nation even at the cost of concealments and suppressions of fact. They are made, and the whole book is written, avowedly with an eye to the future, to create a legend that though England had planned the downfall of Germany the enormity and baseness of her methods were largely unsuccessful; that the German, and not the English Fleet was victorious in battle. The historian is bound to deal with such statements when persisted in after war has ceased, for they are an



endeavour to falsify history by making it record "not things as they are but the images people make of them."

## 2. ENGLISH CRITICISM

The British public or general mass of the nation in these islands proceeds, as we have said, rather by instinct than by reason. It turns to criticism only in moments of disappointment, and the criticism, though often fundamentally right, is seldom clearly worked out. But the general feeling after the battle of Jutland that Admiral Jellicoe had missed an opportunity of practically annihilating the German Fleet cannot be lightly dismissed. A crushing victory would not only have continued the brilliant tradition and fulfilled a belief of many years ; it could not have failed to diminish greatly the moral resistance of our enemies. Moreover, naval opinion, so far as it is possible to judge, is for the most part strongly on the same side. It is not surprising that when war conditions came to an end the case against the Commander-in-Chief should have been openly stated by an able member of the House of Commons, who had formerly been a naval officer, and therefore represented not only lay but expert opinion.

Commander Carlyon Bellairs's book on the battle of Jutland is a kind of speech for the prosecution, arraigning with great vehemence, clearness, and forensic ability both the Admiralty and the Admiral. His charge against the Admiralty is twofold, that it failed to prepare for war, and that its preparations were concerned with material rather than personnel. On the second of these two points he is forced to be somewhat inconsistent. On the first he says a great

deal that is true, though his case is both one-sided and over-stated. He quotes, and most of us will accept, Mahan's remark on the main defect of the average British officer: "to meet difficulties as they arise instead of by foresight, to learn by hard experience rather than reflection or premeditation, are national traits." No doubt we might do better with more foresight and a more elaborate staff system, but Commander Bellairs does not bring into the account certain other considerations—the danger of too much theory and too much preparation; the fact that they belong more essentially to the aggressive than to the defensive policy; the significance of the admitted truth that they are not in accordance with the national genius, and also of the historical record, that in spite of, or perhaps because of, that untheoretical, un-aggressive, confident, and adaptable genius, we have survived where all our enemies have fallen. It may be conceded that while our policy is right, we shall do well to better our preparatory thinking.

With regard to Admiral Jellicoe, what is charged against him is not a matter of policy but of principle—a heretical view of the art of war, with a consequent failure in practice. Here again the question is not so easy as it is made to appear. It will still be debated many years hence, and the historical school of naval thought, for which Commander Bellairs pleads so well, will be always faced by the difficulty that the admitted facts concerning the battle of Jutland may be used to illustrate two opposite principles.

Of these two, Commander Bellairs and those who think with him favour the offensive at all costs. First plan, then dare, is their motto, and Commander

Bellairs's accusation goes so far as to say that Admiral Jellicoe did not dare because to do so was not in accordance with his instructions or his plans. Let us see what this amounts to when it is stated in terms of action. First, we are told that when the two fleets approached one another Admiral Jellicoe failed to take advantage of the surprise which he had effected, and lost time by deploying his battleship divisions on his port instead of on his starboard division, thus forming a line moving eastwards or away from the enemy instead of towards them; secondly, that when he was at last beginning to close the enemy effectively he turned every ship in his line away from a torpedo attack when, by boldly turning towards it, he would have been equally safe and would have kept the enemy's battle fleet in sight and destroyed it; thirdly, that on the morning of June 1 he was in a position to cut off the enemy's retreat to port, but refused to take advantage of the opportunity.

The first of these points takes us to the moment when at 6.14 P.M. Admiral Jellicoe was first able to say with certainty where the enemy's fleet lay. The order to deploy was given two minutes afterwards, and Commander Bellairs remarks that by ordering two torpedo flotillas to his port front and only one to starboard, the Commander-in-Chief had already shown some eight minutes before his intention to deploy to the east. The real decision, therefore, was made, not at 6.14, but at 6.8, and it seems somewhat exacting to blame a commander for tactics admittedly entered upon before certainty could be obtained. Again, while it is evident that by deploying to starboard Admiral Jellicoe would, as things turned out,



have closed the enemy more quickly, Commander Bellairs hardly succeeds in creating the impression he desires, that a serious loss of time and a serious sacrifice of position actually occurred. After all, *Hercules* in the starboard division was in action within four minutes, and the *Iron Duke*, fourteen places ahead of her in the line, within fifteen minutes. It is clear from this, and we know as a fact, that the German line on sighting the Grand Fleet began at once to bend eastward. Two results followed from this. Admiral Scheer's leading ships, as he himself says, were badly overlapped and were being fired upon from three directions at once, while the remainder of the line was in the dangerous position of having to turn successively under the guns of the British rear divisions. If, on the contrary, Admiral Jellicoe had deployed to starboard, and had then turned to port—as he must have done to attain his great object of getting between the enemy and his base—the German line would have overlapped his leading division, which would have been compelled to turn again to port to prevent the T being crossed, and every ship of the other divisions after coming into line behind it would have had to make this same double turn in succession under the fire of a considerable portion of the German line. The position, therefore, would have been exactly reversed, and *Marlborough*, *Revenge*, and *Hercules* would have been exposed to a concentration of fire similar to that which was so damaging to the *König*, *Grosser Kurfürst*, and *Markgraf*.

The question, however, arises here whether, granting the desirability of deploying to port, the manœuvre might not have been so executed as to save time by

bringing the leading divisions more quickly back to the west and into action. Here Commander Bellairs seems to have had an opportunity and to have used it in the wrong way. With the aid of a very telling quotation from a court-martial of 1744, he accuses Admiral Jellicoe of spiritless adhesion to a conventionally rigid line. That this is unfair is clear from the fact, stated and illustrated in Admiral Jellicoe's book, that at 6.50, as the range was apparently opening, in order to close the enemy the signal was made to the fleet to turn south not "in succession" but by divisions. It would seem, therefore, that the general charge of rigidity in tactics breaks down, and that the critic would have done better to point out that a method which was good at 6.50 would have been still better at 6.16. He might possibly have gone even further on this line and suggested that here, if ever, was an opportunity for deploying, not on any one division of the Fleet, but on the enemy himself.

Instead, however, of pursuing in this direction, he prefers to follow out the results which would have been obtained from deploying to starboard, and here his argument, though extremely interesting, becomes merely theoretical. "Had the Fleet," he says, "been deployed to starboard, the Germans practising their withdrawing tactics, would at once have turned to starboard and our own seven battle-cruisers and the four *Barhams* would have held on to the head of their line." Now it is quite clear that if the Germans had made such a turn to the west, Admiral Beatty's whole force would have been very favourably placed for overlapping their head and hammering them at the pivot, but to those who follow Admiral Jellicoe's reasoning it must seem improbable that Admiral

Scheer would have taken this dangerous course, instead of seizing the advantage which would have been offered to him, as already pointed out, of turning away from Beatty and crossing the head of Jellicoe's line.

Again, Commander Bellairs points out that *Invincible* was sunk during that lost time, and assumes that this might never have happened if only more ships had been already in action to distract the attention of the enemy. It is always impossible to say for certain what would have happened in circumstances which did not occur, but we have already noted the evidence from both sides that *Invincible* perished in a single combat with the *Derfflinger*, a duel in the battle-cruiser action, which would in any circumstances probably not have been interfered with by the fire of our battleships. Moreover, Commander Bellairs himself lays emphasis in a later chapter on the fact that the loss of this ship was due, like that of *Queen Mary* and *Indefatigable*, to a lack of protective armour which allowed the enemy's shell to penetrate to the magazine. It is pressing theory too far to assume that this accident would only have been likely to happen during a particular period of time.

On the whole it is probable that after a careful comparison of Admiral Jellicoe's candid and impersonal statement and Commander Bellairs's able and vivacious criticism, a disinterested reader will come to the conclusion that on this point the prosecution has not made out its case. Even the lay critic, who probably has not Commander Bellairs's ability and certainly has not his technical knowledge, may venture so far as this, and he will be supported by



officers of great experience in the handling of fleets at sea.

The second point at issue is a much simpler one. Naval opinion is sharply divided upon the tactical question whether a line of ships in action should meet a torpedo attack by turning towards or away from the attacking force. One turn or the other must be made or the discharge of a certain number of torpedoes simultaneously against a line with only small intervals in it will on the mathematical doctrine of chances almost certainly result in a proportion of hits. The range of the modern torpedo is so great that on a day of low visibility, such as that at Jutland, battleships cannot at the same time be within practical range of the enemy's battle fleet and out of range of his flotilla, if it advances to attack. In Admiral Jellicoe's belief the torpedo is a very formidable weapon in battle, and the right way of avoiding it is the turn away, followed of course immediately afterwards by a turn back to the original course. It appears from his book that the use of the helm is easier and more successful when the turn is away from the point of attack, and also that it gives the torpedoes a farther distance to traverse, while their speed is rapidly running down; also that during the critical period about 7.15 no less than twenty torpedoes did actually cross the British line, but were all sighted and avoided by a turn of four points, or in some cases six points, to port. Admiral Scheer by turning away eight points westwards at the same moment succeeded in his object of opening the range until his ships were no longer visible. Admiral Beatty alone was still driving and hammering irresistibly at the head of the line, while the battleships on both sides, as a pungent

writer has observed, were occupied in running away from one another. The loss of contact was no doubt due much less to Admiral Jellicoe's temporary manœuvre than to Admiral Scheer's persistence in flight; but the flight must have been foreseen, for it was the very reason of the torpedo attack. Two things must be remembered—first, that Admiral Jellicoe no doubt hoped to regain contact, and secondly, that it is often the strong man and not the weak one who holds firmly to a principle on which his mind is already made up, and refuses to allow himself to be flurried in the moment of emergency—

And, through the heat of conflict, keeps the law  
In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw.

But when this has been said, it must also be said that Admiral Jellicoe's method does not seem, upon its merits, to be the better of the two. It is a technical question, but one where experience cannot count for much, since the case had never yet arisen in war. The contrary opinion, moreover, is not merely a lay opinion, but is strongly held by high naval authorities. Their argument is first the general one that a fleet goes into action to face the enemy's fire, whether from guns or torpedoes, and not to turn away from it, and it certainly could never be admitted that as long as a commander possesses a dozen destroyers he can always break off an action when he pleases. Further, to come down to tactical details, it is urged that a fleet advancing directly towards an attacking flotilla would be able not only to avoid torpedoes, but to crush the attacking flotilla with its secondary armament. We cannot doubt that Admiral Jellicoe was familiar with this view long before the action, and had weighed it carefully. It seems fair, then, to

[illegible]





conclude that, whether by his own wish or not, he was acting deliberately upon the principle of avoiding risks so far as was compatible with the attainment of his object.

What, then, was his object? In Commander Bellairs's view, it was the object which he had learnt under a vicious system—the avoidance of injury to his material. It is here that we touch the real crux. When a critic represents the Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet as an unskilful tactician, flurried in the first moment of a great decision, afterwards hampered by rigid love of system, and finally too irresolute to face a dangerous obstacle and come to the real business of fighting, we may be stirred by the writer's vehement sincerity, but we are not convinced. The real debate, the lasting debate, is upon a much more general and a much more interesting point. It begins with a consideration of the position of the two Powers engaged. The weaker is challenging the stronger, trying to take away the control of the sea, long possessed and vitally important. The stronger has everything to lose and very little to gain. It may be fairly argued that its chief interest is the preservation of the *status quo*, or at any rate that any advantage beyond that is not worth the risk of losing what is already in possession. Moreover, in a great Continental war, and especially in this war, where every nation staked its life, it is highly improbable that a victory at sea, however annihilating, would have ended or shortened the struggle. The German Fleet was, in fact, beaten from the sea at Jutland, and was afterwards unused and to a large extent dismantled; yet the war, and even the war at sea, went on for two years. The German submarine fleet, in

its turn, suffered such losses as no fleet has ever before suffered in the longest of wars. Yet at the end, though increasingly ineffective, it was as numerous as ever. Further, the question was not one of leaving the enemy alone or of finally breaking off the action. The enemy was already cut off from his base, and the chances were good of inflicting further loss upon him either immediately or on the following morning. He must have suffered already in contact with so powerful a fleet, and it must be remembered that anything like equal losses constitute a defeat for the inferior force, for they increase the original disparity instead of diminishing it. This, in very slight outline, is the argument from reason, the view of a judgement influenced by the consideration of wide principles and an immense and ever-present knowledge of detail. Against this may be set a narrower, but more natural, instinct, which has told some of our great admirals in the past, and at least one at Jutland, that the defensive method is out of place when you have an inferior enemy flying before you, and that a desperate trick has seldom brought success to an inferior force at sea, and never to a beaten one. There is the true subject of debate, and it is difficult to see how, in this case, a solution can ever be reached. Not only are the two opposing views represented by peculiarly characteristic types of naval intellect and naval daring; but those who discuss the question, and even the most impartial of historical students, must approximate by nature to one of the two characters, and to a great extent be impervious to the influence of the other.

The third and last point of criticism against Admiral Jellicoe is not a very important one. In



making his way by night through the rear of the British line, Admiral Scheer achieved his only real success, the escape from annihilation. That he could have been found next morning off Horn's Reef or in any position where a fleet could manœuvre to attack him, is a pure assumption, supported only by German taunts. Admiral Scheer, as we know, realised fully that his fleet was incapable of further fighting, and it is clear from his disappointment that Admiral Jellicoe's action or inaction was the right course to take. The risk of entering a modern mine-field is a very heavy one, and it was clear that the German fleet would not venture beyond the limits of their ambush. The general principle of avoiding risks which would endanger our superiority would operate here far more strongly than on the day before, and on this point there was probably no difference of opinion in the whole fleet.

It is not probable that the disappointment felt at first over the battle of Jutland will long continue, or will be shared by our posterity. "What asken men to have?" What is it that a nation—even an old and proud nation—asks of its seamen in the day of battle? Is it not enough that the combat was sought and welcomed by men of every rank, and fought with the old incomparable nerve and cheerfulness; that the leader of the fighting line showed the highest possible spirit and tenacity, and that the Commander-in-Chief so handled his enemy as to deprive him of every chance of real success, to drive him helpless and disheartened out of range, and to send him home materially incapable of further action and morally disabled for the remainder of the war? The student of naval tactics will, from a different

point of view, find different matters of interest. The discussion of them may possibly affect in some degree one or two naval reputations, and may more probably draw serious attention to the necessity of organisation and scientific study ; but unless the human race is capable of being led into universal error by the magic of bombast, there will be no doubt or debate about the verdict of history. The British Fleet fulfilled its traditional work during four years of a world-wide conflict, on a scale never before known : it carried great armies over sea, swept all the oceans clear, and guarded the Dominions scattered along their shores ; shut up the hostile Empire within an impassable barrier, and retained from the first day to the last that control which is a vital condition of our national existence. Incidentally, it broke the enemy's High Sea Fleet in the battle of Jutland.

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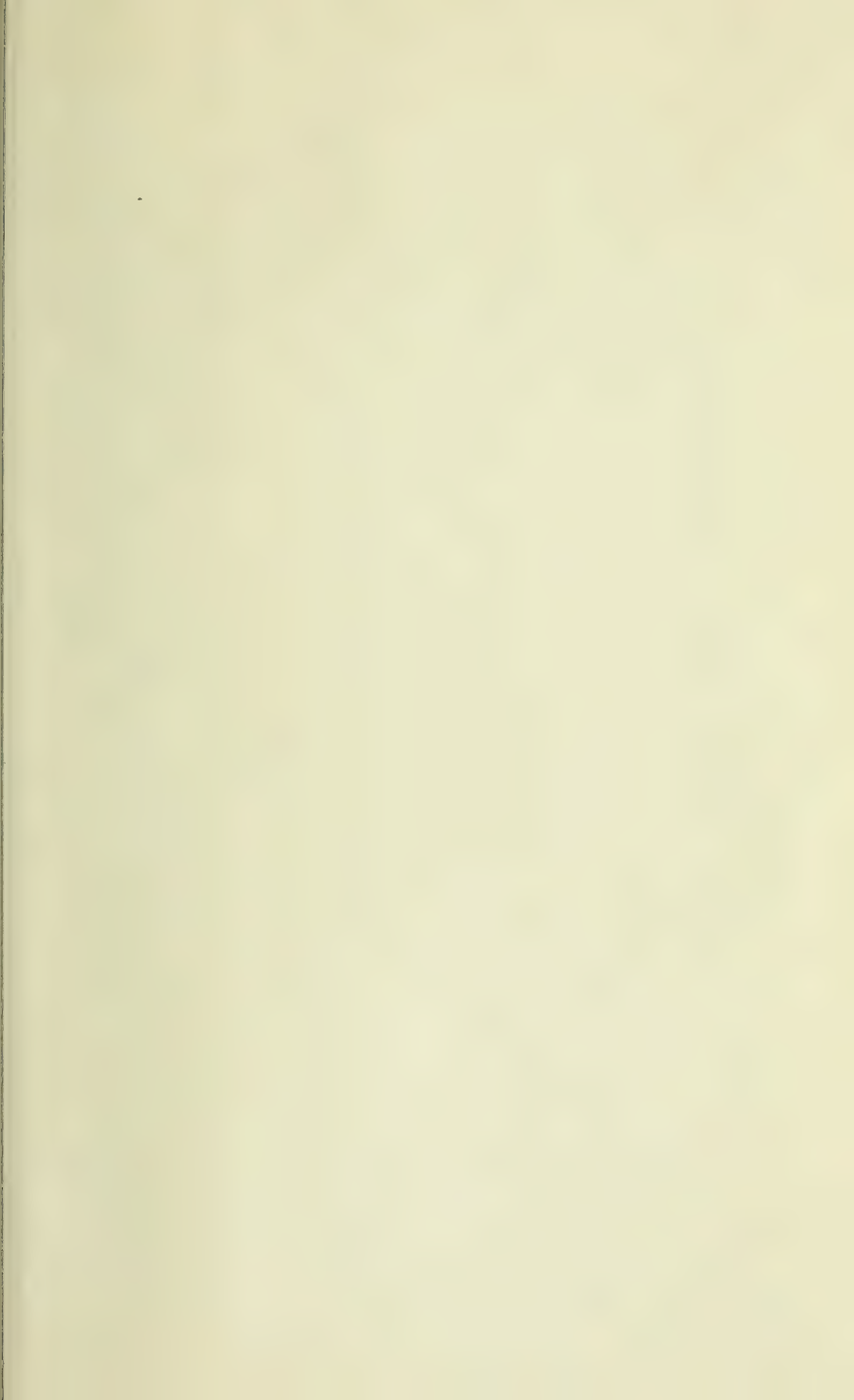
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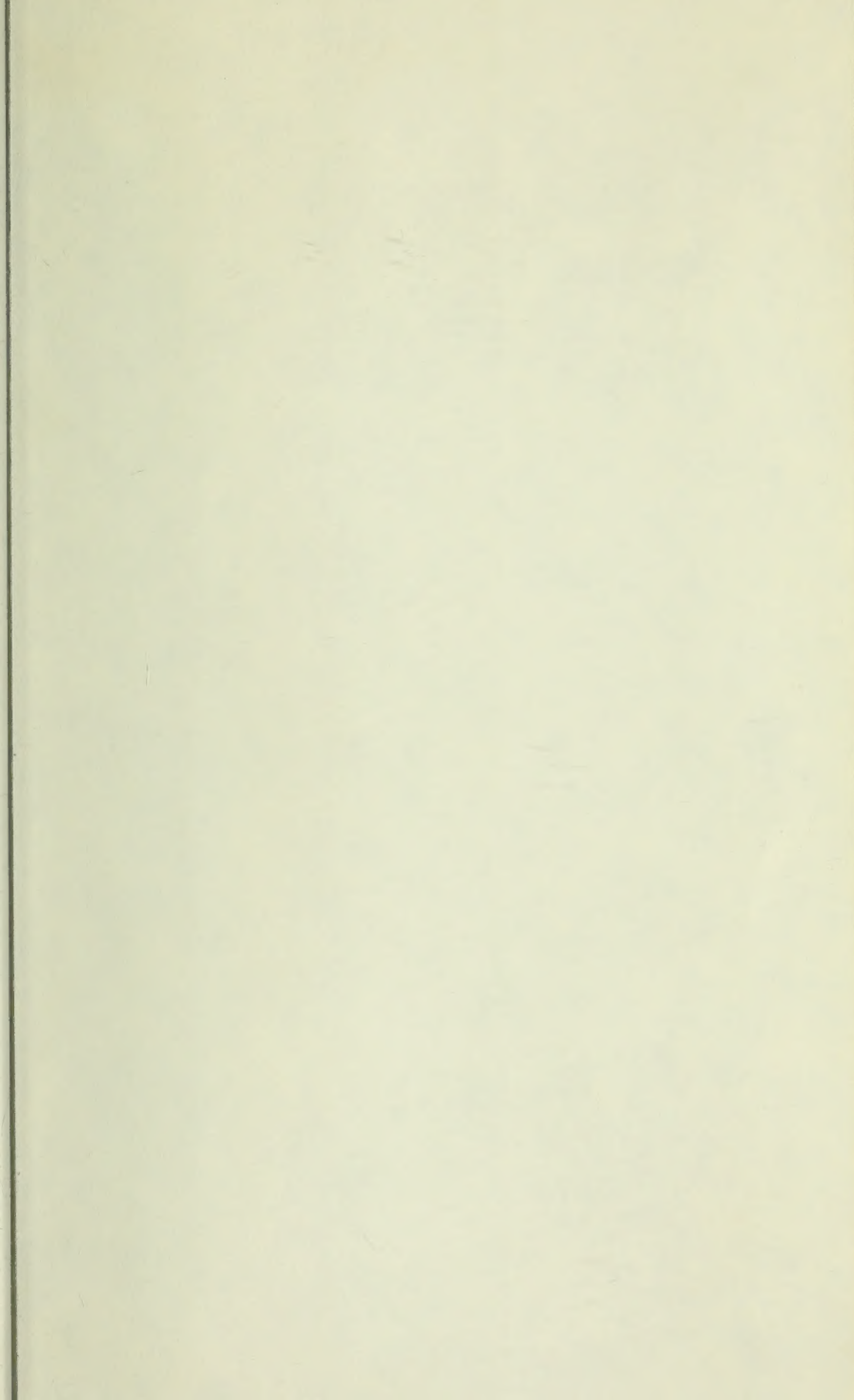
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